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A Reformed Weekly

JANUARY 17, 1992/47th year of publication/No. 2290

Uganda in midst of 'second holocaust'

Dan Wooding

KAMPALA, Uganda — When Idi Amin, the infamous "butcher of Kampala," finally fled his country of Uganda more then 13 years ago, he left some 500,000 of his countrymen dead in what was then dubbed the "Uganda Holocaust."

But now there's an even worse curse to strike the land — AIDS — and a total of seven million Ugandans could die from it in the next four years. That's equal to the entire population of London, England.

The horror of this second "Uganda Holocaust," the worst AIDS epidemic in Africa, is heightened by the fact that over one-third of the population of this country that Winston Churchill once called the "Pearl of Africa" will die soon from this horrible disease.

This incredible statistic has brought Canadian-born missionary, Peter Simon Turko of Global Harvest to the United States to challenge North American Christians to get involved in an urgent mercy mission to help the long-suffering people of Uganda.

Turko, a former professional Canadian football player and nightclub entertainer, is appealing for doctors, dentists, carpenters, mechanics, pastors and teachers to go to Uganda for a dramatic last-ditch effort to aid the people before AIDS claims even more in this beautiful East African nation.

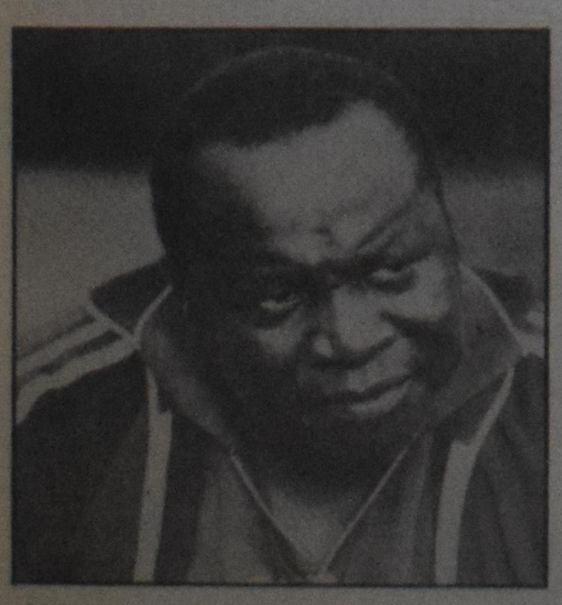
'Brain drain'

"Uganda's educated — doctors, teachers and their tradespeople — have left the country and settled in England, Europe and the USA," Turko says sadly. "They have remained [in these countries] because of financial gains. They refuse to return to a destitute nation fighting for its existence both spiritually and physically. In Uganda, the average salary is approximately $10.00 a month."

Turko states that the country's citizens, reeling from 20 years of civil war, are trying to regain their equilibrium both spiritually and physically but are fighting a losing battle because of this brain-drain.

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, a one-time evangelical street preacher, has requested, "Please send us teachers so our people can become productive and, in so doing, support themselves."

The president believes that just sending financial assistance will not help in the long term. They must be taught to be productive and earn their way and, with dignity, support their families themselves and regain their self-esteem, he says. Then Uganda can again become the "Pearl of Africa."



Idi Amin. Photo: C.C. files

Pastors desperately needed

Turko believes that one service Christians can perform for Ugandan Christians is to come and teach the pastors biblical Christianity. "Many of the pastors who claim to have been called by God are pioneering works without any solid Bible teaching," he claims. "Some have only attended church for a few weeks after making their commitment to Christ and have gone out with more of a witchcraft doctrine than a biblical one.

"They call themselves apostles, prophets, reverend, and one has even purchased robes for himself and his wife and has claimed the title of Archbishop and given his wife the title of Bishop."

Turko, who has held many seminars for Ugandan pastors over the past five years, says he always asks those attending, "How many of you have read the New Testament through one time?" He said the shocking news is that only a small percentage have.

As part of his crusade to help the Ugandan people and to make sure his ministry is not a burden on the people here, Turko is offering a four-colour cartoon calendar which will not only bring a smile to the faces of Western Christians, but will also provide much-needed funds to support ministry there, purchase land on which to build churches, orphanages and dispensaries, and fund the sending of a container with clothing, tools, sewing machines, exercise books, school supplies and bicycles so that the pastors can spread the Gospel further afield.

Turko is particularly interested in professionals coming out of retirement to help the Ugandan people. "I believe that many are tired of their retirement and long to be active and productive once again," he says. "Maybe they could 'unretire' and become productive for Jesus in Uganda."

Canadian-Cambodian Christians organize relief effort with Mennonites

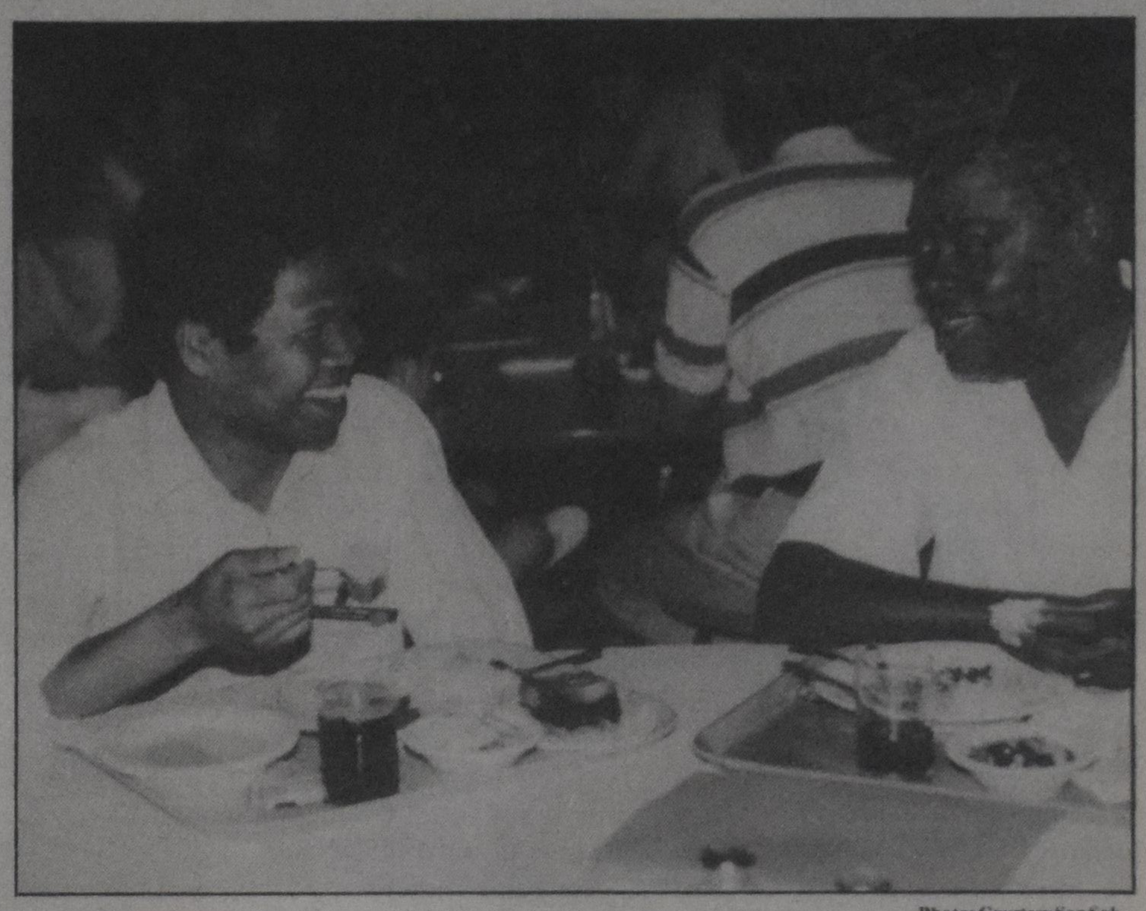


Photo: Courtesy San Sok

Canadian-Cambodian activist San Sok, left, eats lunch with a conference acquaintance.

Bill Fledderus

ST. THOMAS, Ont. — After the most devastating flood season in decades, Cambodia (also known as Kampuchea), China and other southeast Asian countries are in need of help. At least one Ontario community of Cambodians is trying to do something about it.

San Sok is a leader in the 200 member Canadian-Cambodian enclave in St. Thomas, Ont. He laments the damage figures he has received from overseas: 30 people dead, 415 villages flooded, 8,000 houses destroyed and over 200,000 people affected, according to Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Over 240,000 hectares of rice fields have also been damaged.

In a farming country which has already been through decades of butchery and civil war, floods could be just one more calamity added to the top of an already immeasurable pile — or they could be the straw that breaks the camel's back, Sok explains.

Sok recently went to Ottawa to meet with members of the Canadian Cambodian Development Program (CCDP), a coalition of non-government organizations who have been given government money to help the beleaguered country. Canada will not give money directly to the Cambodian government because in the past it was untrustworthy.

Sok was there to advise how money could be spent without it getting into the wrong hands.

While there, Sok became aware of work being done in Cambodia by the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The church Sok attends, St. Thomas Cambodian Christian Church, is affiliated with the Christian Reformed denomination. But the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee does not have a Cambodian placement, so he contacted MCC.

Gifts multiply

MCC explained to Sok how any relief money he might be able to raise could be funnelled through its programs so that it would be multiplied four times by government money, courtesy of the federal government's Canadian International Development Association (CIDA).

Another organization, World Vision, has also been operating assistance programs in Cambodia for a long time.

Sok points out that things are not as politically bleak for Cambodia as they have been in the past. A United Nations-sponsored peace treaty was signed on Oct. 23, and long-exiled former leader Prince Norodom Sihanouk has returned to the country to head an interim government until elections can be held (within two years).

Many Cambodians and expatriates are worried, however, that the Khmer Rouge, a communist group which presided over a gruesome reign of terror in the 1970s, is also sitting down at the table with various other Cambodian factions.

Thinkbit:

Here lies buried
your husband, my husband,
and both our mother's husband,
your father, my father
and both our children's father.

(The solution to this riddle can be found on p. 19)

Submitted by a reader.

In this issue:

JFK is a controversial but thoroughly absorbing film . . . . . p. 7

Frank Sawyer captures the ambiguity of feeling about Columbus in his poem "Columbus Sailed" . . . . . p. 10

John Bratt faces "The Winds of Change in the Christian Reformed Church" . . . . . p. 11

A new feature, "You Told Us..." will allow young adults to speak their minds on various issues. . . . . p. 13

News

What will fundamentalist Muslim rule mean for Algeria? analysts ask

Marian Van Til

ALGIERS, Algeria — The Koran may soon determine the manner in which most of the Middle East — if not the world — is governed, gleeful Islamic politicians in Iran, Sudan, Yemen and elsewhere believe. They were cheered by the stunning victory in Algeria's first free parliamentary elections a few weeks ago of the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front, reports the *Christian Science Monitor* (Jan. 3-9, 1992). That same victory was described by the *Monitor* as sending "shivers through much of the Middle East and beyond."

"Moderate, slowly democratizing regimes in Egypt and Jordan witnessed again the power that fundamentalist Islam can exert over disaffected masses of voters," says a *Monitor* analysis. "Neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco, where similar Islamic movements have been suppressed, were stunned. Spain, France and Italy worried about a new wave of immigration being set off by the prospect of a rigid sectarian regime."

Those who rejoice over the "fundamentalist tide" sweeping the Middle East, assuming that the Algerian elections mean an extension of that wave, "underplay the differences between Algeria and other countries where Islamic rule holds sway," the *Monitor* believes.

Important differences

Other analysts, too, point to Algeria's differences from Middle Eastern Muslim states. Unlike them, Algeria is 99 per cent Sunni Muslim. Sunni Muslims have generally been less inclined to radicalism than the Shiite Muslims who dominate Iran and Lebanon, for example.

Then too, analysts point out, the previous Algerian government, controlled by the National Liberation Front (NLF), was corrupt and severely mismanaged the country. Many voters were likely casting a protest vote against the NLF as a vote of great support for the Salvation Front. Thirty per cent of the work force is unemployed, the country's oil wealth has been on a steady skid since the early 1980s, and the population is rising dramatically.

So far, the Salvation Front hasn't clearly defined its objectives or programs — beyond a commitment to Islamic law. It's too early to tell whether Algerians have traded one kind of tyranny for another, and whether they will accept it if they have. "It's too early to assume that Algeria has veered toward some kind of dark age and that it may take others with it," the *Monitor* concludes.

Despite French/English climate, French immersion enrolment soars

C.C. Staff

OTTAWA — Despite the increasing tensions between Quebec and English Canada, and even though public school enrolment declined in the first half of the 1980s, enrolment in French immersion programs increased steadily throughout the decade, a Statistics Canada report says.

More than 228,000 students took French immersion in 1988-89. Those students made up 12 per cent of total enrolment in second-language programs, more than double the rate in 1980-81.

Though there is no data on how successfully French immersion students learned the language, students who take such programs are more likely to become bilingual than those who merely take French courses in school, says StatsCan.

Though there are calls for Canada's official bilingualism to be reviewed, the latest being by Alberta's Premier Don Getty, polls show that Canadians consistently support opportunities for students to learn both official languages. And official bilingualism allows the federal government to help the provinces fund French immersion programs.

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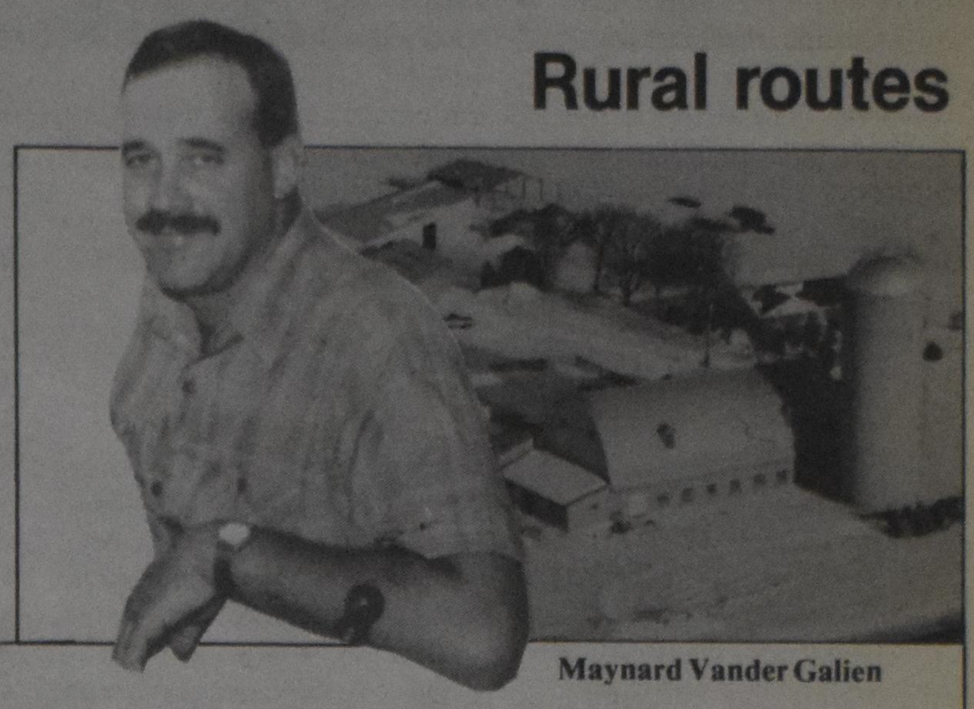


Maynard Vander Galien

The spectre of cholesterol

The month of January always reminds me of the Roman god Janus. Janus was a strange looking fellow with two faces. One face was always looking back to where it had come from; the other face looked ahead to where it was going.

As we look back at the past year and ahead to the next 12 months — and perhaps to the year 2000 — we are probably wondering what the future holds for us. Will our country be split? Will more members leave the Christian Reformed Church? What about our health? And what foods will be safe to eat?

Cholesterol was one of the bad words of 1991. Cholesterol (or should we say its absence) has become a key selling point for manufacturers, and an important reason to purchase for consumers.

We see the word cholesterol everywhere. On many labels and every type of product: "No cholesterol"; "50 per cent less cholesterol"; "less cholesterol"; "Cholesterol free." Many of those foods *never* contained cholesterol, but multinational food-packaging companies found a good way to peddle their products by advertising them as containing no cholesterol.

Phobia

It's all very confusing for the health-conscience consumer and it hurt many producers in the pocketbook. But now many leading health doctors are saying enough is enough and are speaking out against this cholesterol phobia. Dr. Phil Gold, the physician-in-chief at Montreal General Hospital, wants people to forget about cholesterol and go back to eating eggs, butter and meat with peace of mind. Gold believes the overwhelming majority of people do not need to fear coronary heart disease due to cholesterol.

Speaking to the annual convention of the Canadian Institute of Food Science and Technology recently, Gold said he is especially concerned about cholesterol reduced diets for children and wants them to drink whole milk and not skimmed or low-fat milk. Cholesterol is required to produce healthy cells in the body and brain, making it particularly important for growing children. Gold is upset that some U.S. children are now routinely tested for blood cholesterol levels. He expressed concern that we will end up with "a mentally impaired population that may live a few days longer" if the current obsession with low-cholesterol food continues to gain momentum.

High cholesterol levels represent a risk factor for only two per cent of Canadians, he insists, but "a risk factor is not a disease," adding that "we have no information that lowering cholesterol levels is effective as a primary prevention of heart disease." According to Gold, existing data indicate that cholesterol levels have no importance for late middle-aged people. For example, lowering the cholesterol of a 55-year-old man to the widely accepted standard reduces his chance of heart disease by only one per cent over eight years.

Butter is better

"Cholesterol" has become an epidemic — one caused by physicians, says Gold. "We are panicking the population without information."

Dr. W. Glifford-Jones, the internationally syndicated health columnist, said recently that "blaming hens and cows for coronary disease is like blaming the iceberg for sinking the *Titanic*. A foolish captain sunk the ship; heart attacks result from a faulty lifestyle."

"The liver produces 80 per cent of the body's cholesterol, Glifford-Jones points out. He says people should go back to the farm and eat farm foods. "Trust farmers rather than multinational food-packaging companies. This means casting a wary eye at margarine and going back to butter. Nuts, whole grains, dark green leafy vegetables, bananas, raisins, corn, potatoes, cheese, meats and dairy products are loaded with magnesium."

This Toronto doctor and health columnist says there is increasing evidence that too little magnesium may set the stage for hyper-tension. On occasion this deficiency precipitates irregular fluttering of the heart, resulting in sudden death.

Toronto dietician Sheila Murphy, who writes the column "It's Your Health," said in her December column that "high blood cholesterol doesn't mean you'll automatically have a heart attack. Risk factors don't cause diseases."

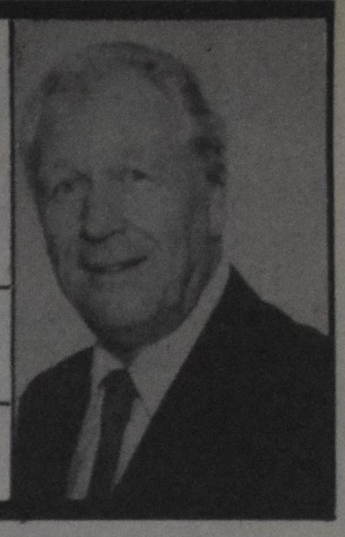
"If you like to butter your bread and drink whole milk, relax and enjoy. According to Agriculture Canada, dairy products aren't the major sources of fat in the Canadian diet," Murphy explained.

I hope you have a happy and healthy New Year and may God bless you and your loved ones in 1992.

Maynard Vander Galien farms in the Ottawa Valley (Renfrew) and writes weekly, bi-weekly and monthly "Rural routes" columns.

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



Mr. William Thorsell is the Editor-in-chief of the *Globe and Mail*. He is also the Prime Minister's "leak." When the Prime Minister's office wants to get some news out in an unofficial fashion, Mr. Thorsell gets the call. So when Mr. Thorsell hinted this week at a flare-up of the old Mulroney-Clark feud you can be sure that the sparks are flying in them-there hills. Monsieur got a new chief of staff. It is that old Ontario Tory blue machine engineer, Hugh Segal.

Mr. Segal is one of those persons who could sell life insurance for babies not yet conceived. His smile would disarm a hungry cannibal who was ready to put him in the pressure cooker. Mr. Segal, who suffers from slight protein overload, is now the second most powerful man in the country. Monsieur, while he was in the appointing mode anyway, ordained a new press secretary and a lady ambassador, Louise Frechette, to the United Nations.

★ ★ ★

Three innocents abroad, Tory Geoff Scott, Liberal Beryl Gafney and NDP's *enfant terrible* Svend Robinson, were going to convert the Chinese government into new-and-improved, baby-pink democrats with respect for human rights. The aged *apparatchiks* who rule that country and who sicked tanks on unarmed students had other thoughts. They threw the three MPs on a bus and with no ceremony at all kicked them out of the country. I seem to remember that we Canadian taxpayers support that bunch of hooligans in China to the tune of some $40 million.

★ ★ ★

With one ruling, Mr. Justice Dufour of the Quebec Superior Court plunged us into a debate that will rage on in society and the church for the rest of this decade, at least. With his decision that a patient has the right to tell doctors to discontinue life support, Mr. Dufour's ruling opens a plethora of perplexing moral, religious and political questions that will haunt us for years to come.

★ ★ ★

NDP governments in the country are not being received in their seats of power with red roses and champagne. Ontario's corduroy socialists found a multi-billion dollar deficit waiting for them, and now their counterparts on the West coast have had a similar surprise: a deficit so high it almost touches the ozone layer. B.C. Premier Michael Harcourt went so far as to say that he is not a socialist. Which reminds me of the wolf in grandmother's bed saying that he has such big ears to allow him to see better. The exact translation of Mr. Harcourt saying "I am not a socialist" is "Keep the Hong Kong money coming." Politics and diplomacy have their own hermeneutical rules. In the meantime (or perhaps mean time) Mr. Harcourt ordered all his ministers to cut next year's spending by 15 per cent.

★ ★ ★

Statistics Canada, which knows more than anyone can ever think off, has gladdened our hearts with the announcements that there was a slight rise in Help Wanted ads in the country's press.

★ ★ ★

Our government does so many flip-flops it could probably win a medal in the Olympic gymnastic competition. The latest one was on breast implants, declared unsafe and banned by the U.S. Federal Drug Administration. Health Minister Benoit Bouchard did a major-league flip when in 48 hours he went from disagreeing with the FDA to halting the sale of the implants in Canada.

★ ★ ★

In the "Don't get angry, get even" column we file this report: a council member of a U.S. border town described Canadian cross-border shoppers as idiots and louts. But now he has been banned from entering Canada where he had been working for the last 10 years at the Vancouver General Hospital. Canada Customs, stand on guard.

★ ★ ★

I overheard someone who said, "You've got to have some bad habits, otherwise when you approach old age you're like a ship in a storm with no ballast to throw overboard."

★ ★ ★

Banks are complaining about a shortage of pennies. Maybe that is because too many people are stashing them away in their penny jars. Come on, people, help out the bank — start saving loonies. These are the '90s; a peanut jar full of pennies will buy you half of tomorrow's newspaper. If you want the funnies you have to bring another jar full.

★ ★ ★

The most disturbing foreign news was not President Bush chucking up all over the carpet at the Tokyo state dinner, or the sight of the U.S. chief in pain on the floor. What really was the downer of the week was Japan's Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's speech in which he urged Japanese industry to show compassion over the defeat of the U.S. auto industry. True, U.S. automakers have not really taken the Japanese market by storm. They are still importing cars there with steering wheels on the wrong side. Traffic in Japan drives on the left side of the road. What bugs me is that one of the butchers of W.W. II are the world's economic kingpins hardly half a century later.

★ ★ ★

The defenders of Stalingrad and the conquerors of Berlin have been reduced, too, to international panhandling. Only Western help can stave off famine in the former Soviet Union. Inflation hit the Russians with the force of a locomotive going full speed. Astronomic price increases left people staring incredulously at simple loaves of bread. Yeltsin is preparing for the backlash by buying great quantities of tear gas in Germany.

★ ★ ★

Left in the economic deep freeze without Russian aid, like a lonely wallflower at a high school prom, is Cuba's bearded Fidel, the last of the true revolutionary heroes of Marxism. Even in moments of tranquility he acts and sounds like a man whose boxer shorts are on fire. Whether the revolutionary zeal of Cubans can survive consumer goods shortages is the question that will be answered in a year or so. It's hard to be a devout follower of any system that cannot supply a nation with toothpaste, toilet paper and TV. In order to get their hands on some real money Cubans begin to lure tourists to their beaches.

★ ★ ★

The 15th Yugoslavian cease-fire took on the posture of some permanence in spite of the downing of a helicopter which killed five European Community observers. Do all Yugoslavians carry arms, or does it just seem that way? The same question goes for citizens of Georgia, where every Tom, Dick and Harry seems to shoot at every other Tom, Dick or Harry that comes into their sights. When will they ever learn?

★ ★ ★

The Middle East peace talks are proceeding with the speed and efficiency of a centipede on slippery ice. Israel expels Palestinians. Palestinians wait for word from Five-O'Clock-Shadow Arrafat. Palestinians are celebrating the anniversary of the *intifadah*. Israelis are delaying their arrival. Chuck-a-chuck, chuck-a-chuck, spitter spatter.

★ ★ ★

The lady with the thousand shoes — no, I don't mean Mrs. Mila Mulroney, I'm referring to Mrs. Imelda Marcos — wants to become president of the Philippines. She needs a collection of bigger size.

★ ★ ★

While we still do battle with the drinking-and-driving syndrome, the government of Singapore is way ahead of us. Those wise rulers have just issued an edict which forbids the chewing of gum while walking. So be careful on your next trip to Singapore.

★ ★ ★

And for seniors who did not make the snowbird trip this year, the city of Kingston, Ont., features shuffleboard every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at one of the United Churches.

★ ★ ★

British journalist Katharine Whitehorn is quoted in the *Globe and Mail*: "How do you ever get credit for the things you manage not to say?" Many a minister wonders about that too, Katharine. And while I am quoting anyway, here are a few more: "The trouble with eating Italian food is that five or six days later you're hungry again." And a cannibal converted to the old fashioned Catholic religion will eat fishermen only on Friday. Cannibal jokes are really in lately: I even had someone from Grand Rapids, Mich., call me with one. This is *Calvinist Contact*, though, which accepts only jokes that are fit to print and Reformed in principle.

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

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It helps to find out what Jesus *did* say
or
Are you sure you want your church to grow?

There's a picture of the Christian life floating around in some churches that suggests that being a Christian is a pretty nice thing. You get rid of all your garbage by allowing Christ into your heart and you enter a state of bliss characterized by fellowship with a wonderful God and with a church full of nice and friendly people.

That's not the kind of picture I found in an article in the *Reformiertes Kirchenblat*, a Reformed periodical published in Austria. The article is written by a certain A. Abrahamowicz and is entitled *"Was Jesus nicht gesagt hat"* ("Things Jesus did not say"). Let me paraphrase a few sections of this article.

Jesus did not say to his disciples: "Now go merrily on your way, make sure you always have a hallelujah rolling over your lips, be neat and friendly, cheerful and positive, content and satisfied so that people can immediately tell that you are a Christian." Don't try to look "saved," the writer counsels. Even Jesus did not look like a saved person.

Another paraphrase: Jesus did not say, "I have come to light a fire in the fireplace so that you can keep nice and warm." No, he came to set the world on fire.

Once more: Jesus did not romanticize adversity by saying it teaches us so many beautiful things. On the contrary, Jesus fought against adversity, misery and suffering and had very little good to say about them.

A tough assignment

Jesus, according to Abrahamowicz, is not interested in a preoccupation with image Christianity or with comfortable discipleship. Jesus told his followers to do good works so that people who see them help the poor and hungry and imprisoned will praise the Father in heaven.

Helping other people is not an easy thing, says this writer. It means you end up fighting against the demons of hunger, illness and death. Helping another person has all the characteristics of a wearisome battle, and it means you will suffer along with the people you are trying to help.

I am sure many readers know what he means. I know a young couple who have opened their home to children from an abusive and alcoholic family. It's a wonderful thing to do; but when you do it, you open your home to the demons of alcoholism and abuse. These children were the victims of that demon and they had plenty of connections with it. In the end, the children disliked the religious atmosphere in the home, the lack of crisis, and they turned their back on the young couple. Not a nice story with a happy ending.

I hope the experience did not disillusion the couple to the point where they will never take any more risks helping people who suffer. Sow your seed in the morning and in the evening withold not your hand, because you never know whether the seed will take root or not.

The point remains, however, that when we try to follow Jesus by helping people who suffer, we will probably get hurt doing so.

The crucial question

The likelihood of getting hurt has implications for churches who want to grow. Some of them may ask themselves questions like, "How can we be a more vital church? How can we be more effective in drawing others to our church? How can we spread the Gospel to the unsaved?" Whenever churches ask these questions they do some necessary navel-gazing and inventory counting. Is the pastor an exciting preacher? Are we hospitable enough when strangers come to our church? Do we have suitable educational and social programs? Is the parking lot too full? All of these are valid questions to ask and things to look at.

But one question is seldom asked and is perhaps the key to church growth. Are we willing to suffer for the sake of Christ so that people who see us will praise the Father in heaven?

That kind of question does two things: it focuses on "praise growth" instead of church growth and it touches the congregation in a spot where it is most vulnerable — the fear of discomfort and pain. In addition, it sets this whole thing of discipleship straight and leaves the matter of church growth where it belongs: in the hands of God.

Selling the right product

The best salespeople are those who are not trying to sell a product but themselves, I have been told. Misapplied this kind of rule sounds manipulative. But taken in the right way, it means that we are most effective as witnesses if we try to present our new self, which is the Christ within us. That usually means that we must change ourselves as we relate to other people rather than that we try to change them.

I have a theory about this: To the extent that churches are unwilling to pay the cost of discipleship, to that same extent they have to become manipulative and gimmicky to produce numerical growth.

It reminds me of the Beatitudes, which we know for certain that Jesus *did* say when he taught his disciples on a mountainside. These are hard sayings, especially if you try to apply them as growth objectives for a church: Be poor in spirit, mourn, be meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, be merciful, be pure in heart, be peacemakers and be willing to be persecuted for righteousness' sake.

We could say that among the things that Jesus did not say belong some of the approaches for church growth that take the pain out of being a disciple (no pain, no gain). We could also say that among these things belong some lifestyles practised by Christians and ways of relating to others. There are so many things that Jesus did not say but that have become the cornerstone of our lives and of our churches.

If we want to be faithful to the Gospel, we do well to ask the question, "What in fact *did* Jesus say?"

BW

Letters

Food surpluses caused by subsidies

In the *Calvinist Contact* news item "GATT directions of concern, say Christian farmers" (Dec. 20, 1991), Elbert Van Donkersgoed is quoted as saying that a reduction of subsidies will not lead to higher prices for our grains. This is incorrect.

Mr. Van Donkersgoed is right in saying that low prices are caused by surpluses but he misunderstands the manner in which surpluses accumulate. The increase in farm productivity is not the cause of surpluses. By this reasoning we would have surpluses in manufactured goods as well, but clearly we do not. It is subsidized prices that are the cause of surpluses.

The reason farmers, especially European farmers, have produced a supply that far exceeds demand, is because their governments have guaranteed them artificial prices that encourage them to produce more than is needed. In order for this grain to be sold it has to be dumped on the world market below the cost of production. The net result is a huge cost to taxpayers.

Won't produce if it isn't profitable

The direct impact of eliminating subsidies is that inefficient European farmers will find that there is no longer a market for their costly grain. If no one buys your grain, you stop producing in a hurry. By Mr. Van Donkersgoed's reasoning, in the absence of subsidies, farmers will continue to produce even though it is not profitable. This defies the laws of basic economics and simple human rationality. If nobody is willing to buy your grain at prices that cover your costs of production, you can only produce as long as your savings allow you to do so.

This inevitable decline in production that accompanies subsidy cuts will eventually eliminate surpluses and allow prices to rise to the point where farmers will be able to sell grain for at least as much as it costs to produce it. Canadian wheat farmers are among the most competitive in the world and will easily be able to sell their grain on world markets and cover at least their cost of production.

Fred Van Geest
Kingston, Ont.

A novel suggestion

We live two hours southeast of Penticton and there is no Christian Reformed Church in our area, but there is another family beside ours of Christian Reformed background. We subscribe to *The Banner* and they to *Calvinist Contact*. And in the name of good stewardship we trade the two magazines.

A past issue of C.C. carried a column by Maynard Vander Galien which dealt with the idea of passing on magazines. It raised the question whether this is good stewardship or stinginess.

I believe it is good stewardship to pass the paper around. However, this "stewardship" does not help pay the wages of your staff. I therefore suggest that the paper be passed around via a box in the church as mentioned, but that there also be a donation box to collect money for *Calvinist Contact* near the exchange box. As people borrow old issues they can pay a donation. The donations would help pay for the cost of producing *Calvinist Contact*.

Jane Marshall
Midway, B.C.

(Ed.: The above letter was accompanied by a donation.)

Combined effort deserves mention

I just received *Calvinist Contact* today and was very happy to see an article that mentioned Alberta, a seeming rarity in this publication that is dominated by Eastern Canadian news and views. I was especially happy because the article was about a project that in the past has served the needs of many in Sierra Leone and looks like it will again.

I was, however, disappointed that there was no mention made of the fact that initiative and promotion for this project came from the Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference, and that for the first time it was a combined effort of them and the Southern Alberta Diaconal Conference. In this time of events that tend to break down unity of churches I think that the combined efforts of the churches to build something with a common purpose *through their deacons*, deserves to be mentioned.

Henry Bosch, Consultant
Northern Alberta Diaconal Conference
of the Christian Reformed Church
Edmonton, Alta.

Creationism speaker holds non-Reformed views

In a recent advertisement readers of *Calvinist Contact* are invited to attend a symposium in a St. Catharines Christian Reformed Church by Ian Taylor on "Evidence to Support the Genesis Account of Creation."

Readers should be aware that Mr. Taylor promotes his particular interpretations of young-earth creationism precisely because he holds a non-Reformed hermeneutic (way of interpreting Scripture) and a non-Reformed world-and-life-view.

Mr. Taylor argues for a literalist interpretation of Genesis and all of the Bible, a view not held by Reformed theologians. His world and life view assumes a nature/grace dualism and does not accept the teaching of the *Belgic Confession* that we know God by two means, "the creation, preservation and government of the universe" (Art. 2) as well as by the Bible.

A Christian Reformed congregation has some freedom to advocate conservative views which are non-Reformed, of course. But then in an instance like this the public should know that Mr. Taylor reaches his conclusions from a non-Reformed basis.

Robert VanderVennen
Toronto, Ont.

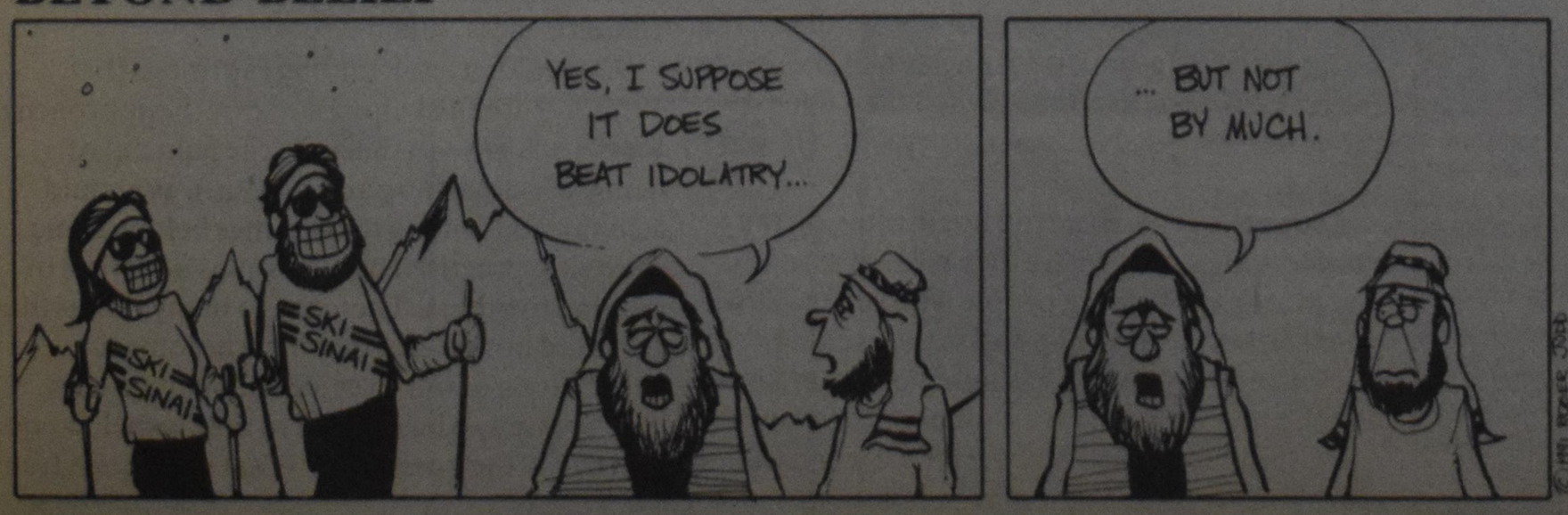
Praise from a sheep lover

Regarding your delightful story "Sheep know about Christmas," in the Dec. 6 issue of C.C., I have just one brief comment: "Baa...."

Maaike Buma
Kitchener, Ont.
P.S. I collect sheep..."sort of."

(more letters on page 6)

BEYOND BELIEF



News digest

Marian Van Til, editor

Bill will increase benefits to children of disabled

(Canadian Scene) — Canadian Federal Minister of Health and Welfare Benoit Bouchard has introduced a bill in the House of Commons which, he claims, will ensure the future viability of the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). Contribution rates will be adjusted upward to reflect new forecasts of expenditures. Canadians earning the average wage can expect to pay $7 more in 1992 than formerly. By 1996, the rates will rise by $42 annually, but CPP payments are creditable for personal income taxes.

Under the new bill, the 170,000 children of disabled and deceased contributors to CPP will have their benefits raised by 30 per cent, from $113 to $148 per month.

Marrying a former in-law now legal

Bill Fledderus

A Canadian marriage law dating from the 1800s has finally been revised to allow divorced people to remarry one of their former in-laws. The revision also sweeps away prohibitions against marriages between uncles and nieces and aunts and nephews (first cousins have long been allowed to marry in Canada).

The changes come with the December 18 implementation of the federal Marriage (Prohibited Degrees) Act of 1990, which sets a minimum list of prohibitions based mainly on biological factors. Clergy who perform religious ceremonies often work with an extended list of prohibitions based on moral concerns.

Legally, the only marriages now forbidden by civil law in Canada are with one's grandparent, child or grandchild (whether by blood or adoption) and with one's sibling (whether by blood, half-blood or adoption).

Drug approval procedure streamlined

OTTAWA — Federal Health Minister Benoit Bouchard announced last week that Canada's drug-approval procedures will be reviewed, with recommendations for speeding up the process to be put forward by June of this year by Denis Gagnon, vice rector of research at Laval University in Quebec City.

Drug manufacturers have long complained about long delays in the approval process — it takes up to three years for generic drug manufacturers to get permission to make "no-name" versions of brand-name drugs which may already have been on the market for seven to 10 years (generic drugs are less expensive to consumers). But new drug applications also take, on average, "well over a year to process," the Health Ministry admits. Gagnon will look at systems in other countries, recommending ways to harmonize systems and to carry on the process efficiently.

Letters

Four suggestions to escape age-old dilemma

Instead of being a "healing to the nations" the Christian Reformed Church is in danger of becoming a nice little social club that has little, if any, relevance to everyday living. Instead of being a place of refuge for hurting Christians, the CRC is in danger of becoming a battleground where ego-hungry and power-seeking people (who call themselves "Christians") argue about who has the exclusive handle on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is not new to the church. The church was plagued by the same problems 2000 years ago when Jesus was born. The Pharisees and Sadducees argued at great length about who was right and who was wrong. And Jesus called them a "brood of vipers" and religious "hypocrites." The only difference today in the CRC is that the labels have changed to "concerned" and "unconcerned" members.

So what is the answer? I think the answer lies in our attitude as Christians towards God and each other. Specifically, it consists of four activities which every CRC member ("concerned" and otherwise) should practise, as follows:

1) Being united: We should learn to focus on what unites us rather than what divides us. Sit down and make a two-column list; on the left hand side write down those things on which we agree (we agree that there is one Word, one Lord, one faith, etc.). Then on the right hand side list those items on which we do not agree. I think you will soon discover that the things which unite us are more fundamental and far outweigh the things which divide us.

2) Being constructive: We should all become more constructive rather than destructive. Let's focus on building each other up rather than breaking each other down. Let's focus on the 99 times when others succeed in doing God's will and not on the one time when the other person falls and sins against God's will. Why would any pagan or outsider want to join a group of people (who claim to be Christians) who spend all their time and energy cutting each other apart?

3) Focusing on our mission: Perhaps, in our hard-headedness we have lost track of what God considers important. I think we are in danger of losing balance in our view of things. Are we seeing things (and issues) in their proper perspective? I think the time has come to rediscover our mission. Each of us should spend our energies on being a "witness" rather than criticizing our fellow church members. Let's grow up and heal, rather than execute, each other with our words and our deeds.

4) Praying ernestly: And finally, let's pray for healing within the CRC and for redirecting our attention and energy to the spreading of the Gospel. Impossible? Nothing is impossible with Jesus Christ. If we have faith, we will be able to move mountains, including the healing of the CRC and a rediscovery of the purpose of the church.

Jesus said, the harvest is ripe but the workers are few. Are you one of the reapers or are you tied up arguing with "concerned" Christians? Do you spend time to spread the Gospel or are you too busy preparing for the next step to move your church out of its denomination? Think about it. Pray about it. Let's re-discover God's Word for the CRC and each other.

Herman Jonker
Nepean, Ont.

Pastors' appeal positive but not complete

I am sure most members of the Christian Reformed Church would agree with the appeal of its senior Canadian pastors not to break the unity of the church and leave, because the essence of the Christian faith is not at stake and our denomination is still a church of our Lord Jesus Christ, desiring to abide by the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions. (C.C. Dec. 6, '91.)

We know that the consequences of a split are devastating, especially to family ties, youth and Christian witness. The pastors are right in saying that our church has never reached full consensus on the issues of creation and the role of women.

But could what Rev. Binnema said be true? (C.C. Jan. 3, '92) — that the disenchantment among some people is not because of certain changes but because they sense there is something missing in too much of the preaching? Even the sermons for reading services committee reported to synods 1990 and 1991 that too many sermons submitted to them did not meet the standards of biblical/theological content.

There should be room among us for disagreement on the issue of ordaining women (although that could prove to be difficult for practical reasons) and the how and when of creation.

Concern about human ancestry

But when "Declaration F" from the 1990 synodical report on the relation of creation to science (already changed somewhat from the minority report) stating "that the clear teachings of Scripture and our confessions on the uniqueness of human beings rules out the espousal of all theorizing that posits the reality of evolutionary forbears of the human race" was only able to get a small majority at Synod 1991, then we are indeed on a slippery slope. This declaration was further watered down the next day by a footnote. (Art. 93, p. 774, Acts of Synod 1991.) If we are not fully sure about the origin and trespass of the first Adam, how can we fully embrace the origin and righteousness of the second Adam? Read what Romans 5 verses 12-21 has to say on this.

It was good and encouraging to hear the appeal for unity from those senior pastors. It would have been better if their appeal had included an affirmation of the uniqueness of human beings as God's imagebearers and a rejection of any theorizing of the possibility of animal ancestry. As I read and understand the Bible, that has to do with the essence of the Christian faith.

Hilbert Rumph
Drayton, Ont.

It could have been 30 senior pastors

You may have received more letters like this one. It is a response to the article in the Dec. 6 issue "Pastors appeal to members of the Christian Reformed Church" to make peace, not war. My response is very brief: "I wish I had been there to sign the appeal as well. I qualify, for I am an older, now retired (as of Jan. 2, 1992) pastor. Count me in as if I had signed it too."

My reasons, briefly:

1. Historically, to be Reformed has always included accepting different points of view on non-essentials to the Good News in Christ in Scripture.

2. Christ's new commandment in John 13: 34, 35, "To love one another as he has loved us," is the very mark of true Christianity as our very witness to the world.

Peter Sluys
Nanaimo, B.C.

Opinion

Society's strength depends on spiritual resources

Solzhenitsyn is a prophetic figure because he has understood the truth that has been cruelly suppressed under Communism for all these years.... Solzhenitsyn's message, summarized in the following quotation, is equally valid for the emergence of democracy in Russia as for its survival in the West.

The strength or weakness of a society depends more on the level of its spiritual life than on its level of industrialization. Neither a market economy nor even general abundance constitutes the crowning achievement of human life. If a nation's spiritual energies have been exhausted it will not be saved from collapse by the most perfect government structure or by any industrial development: a tree with a rotten core cannot stand. This is so because of all the possible freedoms the one that will inevitably come to the fore will be the freedom to be unscrupulous; that is the freedom that can be neither prevented nor anticipated by any law. It is an unfortunate fact that a pure social atmosphere cannot be legislated into being.
(Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *"Our Own Democracy,"* National Review, *Sept. 23, 1991, p. 44.)*

Could it be that Solzhenitsyn's observation about the indispensability of a "nation's spiritual energies" is very much pertinent to the present debate on constitutional reforms in this country? Something to think about.

Reprinted from *WRF Comment*, Oct. 1991.

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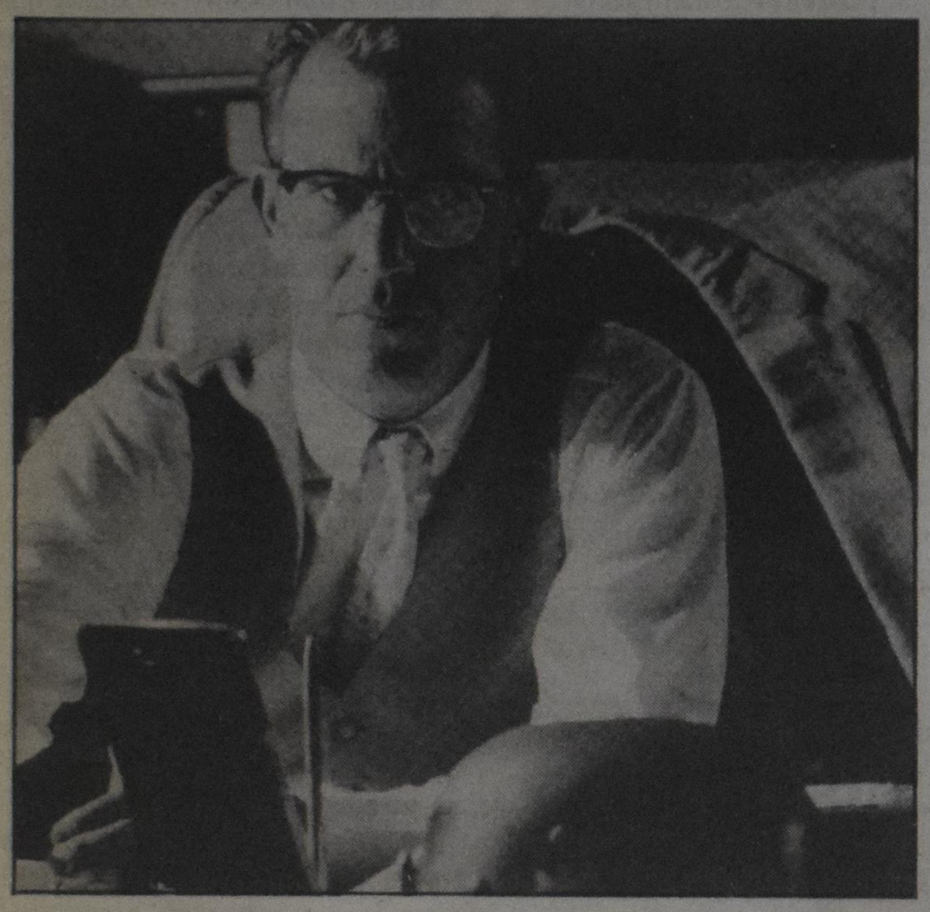
Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

JFK



Rated R
Stars Kevin Costner, Sissy Spacek, Jose Pesci, Gary Oldman, Jack Lemmon
Directed by Oliver Stone

Director Oliver Stone has been taking a lot of flak for what is turning out to be one of the most controversial films in recent memory: *JFK*. Stone dismisses the findings of the Warren Commission whose job it was to investigate John F. Kennedy's assassination on Nov. 22, 1963. Those findings were that Lee Harvey Oswald, the man accused of shooting the President — who was himself killed a few days later by a man named Jack Ruby while live television cameras looked on — was a crazed loner, a communist who had at one time defected to the Soviet Union and who acted on his own.

In 1979 a congressional committee said evidence suggests that there may indeed have been a conspiracy. Congress recommended that the U.S. Justice Department re-examine the case, but in 13 years the government has shown no interest in doing so. Like Stone, very few Americans now believe (polls indicate) the Warren Commission. But if men conspired together to kill Kennedy, just who conspired? And why?

It is Stone's answer to that, and how he presents that answer, that is causing the controversy.

Stone's film is based on research by former New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison who, shortly after the assassination, began investigating a man named David Ferrie who was in New Orleans and who was said to have connections to Oswald.

A coup in the U.S.A.?

Garrison became obsessed with finding out what really happened regarding the assassination, the more so after he started encountering government roadblocks to his probes. His shocking but not entirely unbelievable conclusion (based on pulling together many strange and otherwise unexplainable threads in the story) was that what had actually taken place was a *coup d'etat* — the U.S.'s own military complex, including the Pentagon, CIA and FBI, had hired hitmen to carry off what was essentially a military style execution.

There is some evidence to conclude that Kennedy was becoming a threat to their careers and personal fortunes, to their very existence. Kennedy had thwarted an invasion of Cuba which the CIA and military had been itching for — and preparing for — and he had indicated that he thought the then fledgling war in Vietnam was unwise and unwinnable; he had given the order to bring some of the U.S. "advisors" home. He seems to have had plans to revamp the entire structure of the CIA and the military as well.

The film starts with footage of President Eisenhower's unusual warning in his farewell address, just before Kennedy stepped into the White House: since World War II a "military-industrial complex" has developed; beware its power.

From there, the film purports to show just how great that power had become in a short time.

Truth will come out?

What many of Stone's critics have trouble with is his blending of known assassination data with footage containing his own and Garrison's conjectures about the event. So skillfully and effectively does Stone intersperse the two (also interweaving black-and-white and colour footage) that most viewers will not be able to determine which pictures are historical and which are Stone's. Stone justifies that, not entirely satisfactorily, by saying that filmmakers legitimately create myths; everybody knows this isn't a documentary.

Then too, it's been pointed out, Stone makes Garrison come off as a put-upon truth warrior, a man of great integrity whose only concern was that Americans eventually be told the truth. The real Garrison, they say, wasn't that lily white. Stone ends the film with stirring words he puts in Garrison's mouth about the relation of truth and freedom. Stone has Kevin Costner (as Jim Garrison) look directly at us the audience as he speaks his last sentence. Most of the concepts he puts forth in that speech may be true enough, but no one should doubt that this is Oliver Stone preaching to North American moviegoers. (From an aesthetic point of view, that didacticism is a flaw.)

Engrossing thriller

Whether you agree with Stone's blending of fact and theory or with his conclusions, it can't be denied that the man is an adept movie maker. This film about an American event with world repercussions is thoroughly engrossing from beginning to end. From a film-making point of view, it's a political thriller of high order, with amazing camera angles, good acting and superb editing (except for that last too-long, too-blatant speech at the end). It's three hours of emotional edge-of-the-seat entertainment with a controversial message that Stone says he hopes will get people to value their freedom and to question their government (sealed information about the assassination is not due to be unsealed until the year 2029).

The film is rated "R" because several of its underworld characters consistently use vulgar language and because of graphic scenes of the assassination and autopsy.

Parental response to National Film Board offer 'phenomenal'

OTTAWA (Canadian Scene) — The average annual sale of all National Film Board videos (from a catalogue listing some 8,000 film titles) amounts to 27,000.

In just two months, sales of *Growing Up*, a new three-part production about sexuality, aimed at children, parents and teachers, are approaching the 10,000 mark. The production is available in French or English and was brought to public attention by an insert issued along with the November family allowance cheques issued in mid-November to 4.1 million families in Canada.

"The response has been phenomenal, considering that such a minute percentage of our total catalogue has accounted for more than a third of our annual sales average," says a film board spokesperson.

The three-part program is directed by Moira Simpson and produced by Jennifer Torrance; the two produced *Feeling Yes, Feeling No*, a highly acclaimed series of films for young children on the prevention of sexual assault.

Whole child

Growing Up is based on the assumption that education regarding sexuality should encompass the whole child and his or her experience of being male or female. The filmmakers share the view of many of today's parents, educators and child development experts that well-informed children are in a better position to cope with the eventual challenges of adolescence.

The film covers a broad range of topics including conception and birth, relationships and peer pressure, and emotional changes that occur at puberty. The creative use of animation, live action and original music makes the program entertaining as well as informative.

The *Growing Up* family video will be available until Jan. 31, 1992 at the special low price of $19.95 plus taxes. The French version, *Grandir* is available at the same price. A package designed for classroom use is available at $79.95 and includes a teacher's guide.

The films are available at National Film Board offices across Canada or by calling toll free as follows: Atlantic Canada, 1-800-561-7104; Quebec, 1-800-363-0328; Ontario, 1-800-267-7710; Western and Northern Canada, 1-800-661-9867.

Teenage Edmonton violinist wins high place in international competition

EDMONTON (Canadian Scene) — Late last year Juliette Kang, 16, was the youngest of 40 finalists (aged 16 to 30) to compete in Germany's Hanover International Violin Competition. The young Edmontonian placed fourth and received a DM10,000 prize.

Kang is currently studying at New York's Juilliard School of Music where she is the youngest student enrolled in the school's history. Her performance in Hanover of the Mozart Concerto No. 5 and the Brahms Concerto received repeat curtain calls from the enthusiastic audience.

FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

Students living in the **Classis Niagara-area** who are preparing for the ordained ministry in the CRC and who are in need of financial aid for 1992-1993 are invited to apply to the Student Fund. For application forms please contact **A. Glasbergen, 749 Foss Road, Fenwick, ON L0S 1C0 (Phone 892-3285).** Applications for financial assistance must be received by the Student Fund Committee no later than **March 1, 1992.**

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Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

'Send the TV evangelists to Siberia'

Dan Wooding

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — Peter Serdichenko has a unique solution to the on-going scandal of American TV evangelists who have been accused on national television of "fleecing the flock." This Moscow-based Christian leader feels there should be a pulpit swap whereby the "electronic preachers" give up their ministries to some of his Siberian pastors, go over to minister in their poverty-stricken churches and let the Siberian pastors minister here.

Through this unusual plan, he believes, the high-living American evangelists would gain an insight into ministering in abject poverty while the Siberian pastors could teach the American church some vital lessons on how to live victoriously under persecution.

"I think this pulpit swap would be good for everyone," said Serdichenko, whose group, the Christian Evangelical Faith Pentecostals, has 1,000 churches with 200,000 members. When asked what he thought the American TV evangelists would learn from moving to Siberia this leader said, "Humility! There would be nothing there for them. They could take a bath maybe once every two weeks."

'Trial of freedom'

Serdichenko felt that the Western Church could learn much from what the Soviet believers went through during their "fire of persecution." "Our Pentecostal church went through a trial of fire while the Western church went through a trial of freedom. Our movement was the most persecuted group in the Soviet Union," he continued. "We were counted as heretics by our fellow Christians and forbidden by the authorities. Many thousands of our brothers and sisters died in the concentration camps." Being a Christian during those difficult years, he explained, meant paying a high cost, while many Western Christian leaders lived high off the hog.

"We are now experiencing the trial of freedom," he said. "I would now like to see the Western church go through the trial of fire. I do not wish them anything bad but this would be for their good. Then the 'circus' would cease."

Serdichenko made his remarks while visiting Los Angeles where he was solidifying links with the Assemblies of God denomination. He said the new-found freedom in his land has brought about a "great spiritual vacuum." He added: "If the church is not going to fill it with the Word of God, the Satanists will move right in. They are more liberal in giving for their work than the church and they're quickly helping their own. We only have plans. The challenge to save those people should not only be this church's challenge, but for the whole Body of Christ in the Soviet Union. We should give our lives. We should give whatever we can right now. We cannot physically do more then we are right now."

Serdichenko revealed that his denomination, which is based in Moscow, does not even have an office, a telephone or a FAX machine. (FAX messages are collected from the local post office.)

"Our challenge," Serdichenko said, "is to draw attention to the needs that we have. We hope that our contacts, especially with American churches, will cause them to help us. We need technical equipment and finances to help us evangelize and teach our people about the Good News of Jesus Christ. There is a deep hunger in our country."

Dan Wooding is an award-winning British journalist now living in Southern California where he is the Founder and International Director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times).

Bible school offers Canada's first 'Art & Missions' course

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. (CCC Release) — This January, the Life Eternal School of Bible will offer the first fine arts course in Canada to combine classical drawing instruction with spiritual training.

The Art & Missions course is a studio/critique teaching program offered at both the foundational and advanced levels. Its environment is meant to evoke the atmosphere of the private European master-apprentice studios of centuries past.

The course is unique in pairing drawing instruction with training in Christian outreach. It is open to all aspiring and professional artists who desire to study towards greater artistic and spiritual growth.

The fundamentals taught in the foundational course include classical drawing, compostion, line, form, tone, perspective, figure drawing, costume drawing, still life, light modelling, gestures, sustained drawing, research and basic cartooning. Excursions to the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto are included.

"The fine arts are a powerful form of communication," says the Bible school's founder, Gerrit Verstraete, "and the time is right to combine art training with spiritual training."

Students will split their time between spiritual training in the classroom and art teaching and critique in the studio. The one-year program can be used as credit towards the completion of the school's spiritual training program.

Readers interested in more information may write Life Eternal School of the Bible at P.O. Box 215, Station A, Mississauga, Ontario, L5A 2Z7; or phone: (416) 270-4026.

African evangelicals plan continent-wide evangelism

BINGERVILLE, Cote d'Ivoire (WEF) — At the last fall's meeting of the biennial general council of the Association of Evangelicals of Africa and Madagascar (AEAM), general secretary Tokunboh Adeyemo proposed that its members saturate Africa with campaigns on evangelism and missions in each nation during the 18 months prior to the organization's General Assembly in 1993.

Dr. Adeyemo called on each national evangelical fellowship to carry out national crusades under the general theme "Africa for Jesus." The fourfold objectives of this campaign would be:

- mobilization of churches and missions agencies for evangelism and missions;
- networking of resources for research;
- awareness, information and involvement in continental evangelical direction in the '90s;
- selection of delegates for the 1993 general assembly. The delegates should arrive at the general assembly ready to launch a final continental thrust that would carry the African evangelical movement to the year 2000.

Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

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Only one in four Canadians attends church

Marian Van Til

OTTAWA — A report released near the end of 1991 by Statistics Canada shows that institutional religion means less and less to Canadians. Half of all Canadians *never* go to church, or attend once a year; and just under 25 per cent attend church at least once a week.

That's down from five years ago when 27 per cent attended weekly, while 45 per cent attended never or once a year. The highest percentage of church-goers is in Atlantic Canada, the lowest is in the West, with Quebec's attendance declining the fastest.

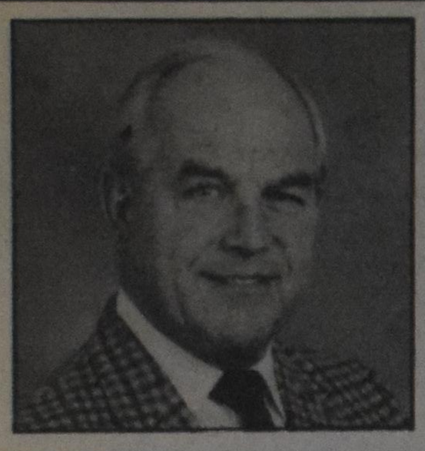
Figures indicate that the number of Canadians who say they have "no religion" has doubled in the past 10 years. That group now represents 12 per cent of the adult population, ranking third behind those who say they are Catholics (45 per cent) or Protestants (30 per cent). The figures also show that older people, women and those who are widowed are the most frequent church-goers.

While church attendance is also declining in the United States, StatsCan says Canada's figures are more pronounced. The numbers are based on interviews with 10,000 people.

Controversy, materialism

Statistics Canada surmised that decreased interest in church may relate to much published controversies such as the United Church's decision to ordain homosexuals and the revealed abuses by Catholic clergy. A spokesperson for the Canadian Council of Churches, however, mentions materialism and consumerism as being the "motivation in life" for many Canadians. "The shopping mall is probably more important than church in most people's lives," says Jim Hodgson, the council's associate secretary of ecumenical education and communication.

Enjoy your winter season.



Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Voluntarism

It is one of the signs of our times that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find volunteers for the various programs in the church. Churches are beginning to depend more and more on paid staff. Because we cannot find enough willing workers who are glad to do something for nothing, many volunteer church positions remain unfilled or inadequately filled, says the* Mennonite Brethren Herald *of Nov. 22, 1991.

"People are too busy. Women, who used to be the ones filling many of the volunteer jobs in the church, now mostly have full-time or part-time jobs. This may bring in extra money that can be used to help pay full-time church workers. However, it also contributes to the shortage of volunteers.

"We are accustomed to think of ourselves as living in the 'leisure society.' We think that people today have increasing amounts of free time. This is not true. A speaker at a conference I attended recently quoted figures that the average *family* work week has not decreased over the last 20 years; in fact it has *increased* by as much as 50 per cent. While the husband's nominal work week may have declined slightly, he often has another "part-time" job; in many cases his wife and older children also have jobs. Our "affluence" has been purchased at the cost of a lot of additional work. Also, increased amounts of time are wasted through commuting on overly congested highways and on 'leisure' activities like television.

"Some of those who do have more leisure time are inclined to spend it at leisure. While some have retired early in order to work full time and free of charge in the church, other retirees (early or otherwise) are so busy travelling to warmer climates that they will make no commitment to church work. They have retired from church as well as from their jobs.

"These developments illustrate why voluntarism has become a serious problem for many churches. Social and economic pressures, exhaustion, unrealistic expectations and sometimes plain selfishness have depleted the ranks of volunteers.

"Professional ministry, while efficient and wise, can never replace the work of the laity. There is no gain in hiring more full-time pastors merely to replace laypeople who have now stopped working in the church. The point of full-time ministry is to extend the Kingdom, not just retain it."

More division

It is a sad reality that in days when Christians need each other more than ever, so many denominations have become divided and are threatened by church splits. The United Church has seen many dissatisfied members leave it, and inside of that denomination all is not quiet, either.* Faith Today *(Nov./Dec. issue) reports a split in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the* Anglican Journal *of December 1991 informs us that retiring Archbishop Bothwell "laments fractiousness" in his church. We read in* Faith Today*:

"Close to 20 churches are considering a split from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) following the approval of a controversial statement on abortion.

"The statement, adopted at the July annual convention in Edmonton, calls abortion 'a tragedy' at best and adds that until the church can provide support and alternatives that would make abortion unnecessary, 'we must, with pastoral integrity, offer support for those who face the agonizing choice of abortion so that they might make that choice in the integrity of their faith in Christ and their own life of discipleship.'

"That position was not good enough for pastor Kenneth Wilsdon and members of the Bethel Lutheran congregation in Elbow, Sask. In September members voted 77 per cent in favour of leaving the denomination. The decision must be ratified by another two-thirds majority after a 90-day waiting period. No date has been set for the second vote.

"The abortion position was also the last straw for Doug MacKay and three other families who once attended Messiah ELCIC in Camrose, Alta., one of the largest congregations in the denomination, with 1,500 members. The group has formed the Solid Rock Free Lutheran Church, which has a weekly attendance of about 38 people.

"MacKay and Wilsdon say they are considering joining the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (AFLC). A number of other congregations wanting to leave the ELCIC are considering the same, says AFLC president Gene Sundby.

"'I've had word of the possibility of maybe 18 to 20 congregations that are considering leaving the ELCIC. That convention (in August) was the catalyst,' said Sundby."

***And this quotation from the* Anglican Journal:**

"'Fractiousness and parochialism are the most pressing problems facing the Anglican Church,' says Archbishop John Bothwell who retired as metropolitran of Ontario in October.

"In an interview with the diocesan newspaper *Niagara Anglican*, Archbishop Bothwell said that fractiousness in the church is part of the greater problem of individualism in society. Society and even the church has lost a real sense of corporateness and belonging to each other,' he said. 'We all want to do our own thing.'

"Parishes 'are in danger of becoming more parochial than necessary,' he warned."

Re-location problems

Everyone knows that it is not easy these days to sell your property. As they say: it's a buyer's market. Churches are also affected by this by-product of the recession. For quite some time the United Church has tried to sell its head office in Toronto and to relocate out of the city. Baptists have tried the same with their property in Toronto. Both attempts failed until now.

In the* Canadian Baptist *of December 1991 we read:

"Although there have been many discussions between the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec and potential buyers for its office building in Toronto known as Baptist Church House, the building still had not sold by early November. Interested parties regularly tour the building, but the BCOQ is caught in the same falling commercial real estate market as hundreds of other properties — including two directly across the street. Both have been on the market more than a year, as has been Church House, and large 'reduced' signs drive home what's happening in commercial real estate across metropolitan Toronto."

And the* United Church Observer *informs its readers that an attempted deal has failed and that the move to another location is now on hold.

"Relocation of the national office of the United Church out of Toronto has been delayed at least until 1994. The decision follows the failure of a final attempt by church administrators to reach a deal to sell the Toronto property for a price that would make the move self-financing.

"The church's Toronto staff have been informed the earliest the move can take place is September 1994. In the meantime, the property at 85 St. Clair Ave. E. will be taken off the market for six months."

Jacob Kuntz is pastor emeritus of First Christian Reformed Church of Kitchener, Ont.

New secretary-general for the U.N.

As far as we know not many church magazines have commented on the election of Boutros Ghali as the new secretary-general of the United Nations. The* Catholic New Times *was an exception. An editorial in its Dec. 15 issue mentioned the fact that Ghali is a Coptic Christian and that he has a Jewish wife. It is his desire to achieve "economic justice for Africa and a negotiated settlement of the seething tensions in the Middle East."

But to perform this task Ghali needs courage, patience and "independence of mind."

"On that last requirement, Boutron Ghali will face a very particular problem in these post-Cold War years. The United States now dominates the United Nations to a degree that threatens to paralyse any alternative perspective.

"Egypt seems to accept Great Power hegemony as a fact of life in the real world. A recent example (or so it seems from this distance) was Egypt's ready agreement to join the U.S.-led war against Iraq. That readiness was promptly rewarded by the cancellation of a huge debt owed by Egypt to the United States.

"Canada, alas, showed the same unseemly readiness; at least, the federal Cabinet did: Canada's war planes had left Germany for Saudi Arabian airfields even before the relevant vote was taken in the House of Commons. Both Egypt and Canada have some ground to recover since Operation Desert Storm.

"Nations often blink when a Great Power stares, but it is crucially important that a United Nations secretary-general should keep a resolute independence in the face of pressure from Washington. There are new possibilities for the United Nations now that the former bitter Great Power rivalry is no more. And needless to say, not everything that the United States wants for the world is a bad thing. But domination is a bad thing. It would be tragic if the United Nations became merely an extension of the American State Department. The U.N.'s agenda must not shrink to fit Washington's interests.

"Boutros Ghali, we wish you peace and courage — and independence of mind."

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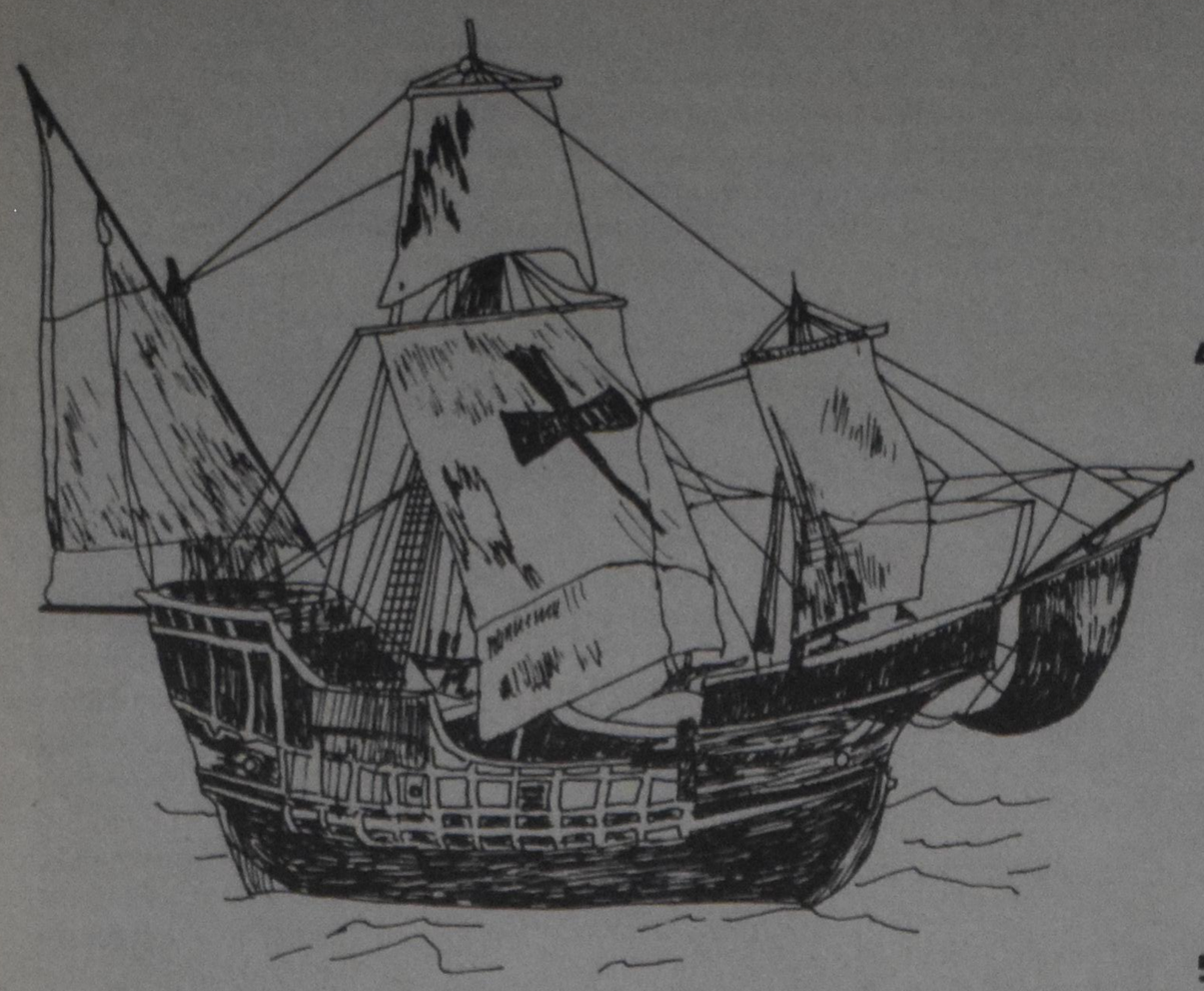
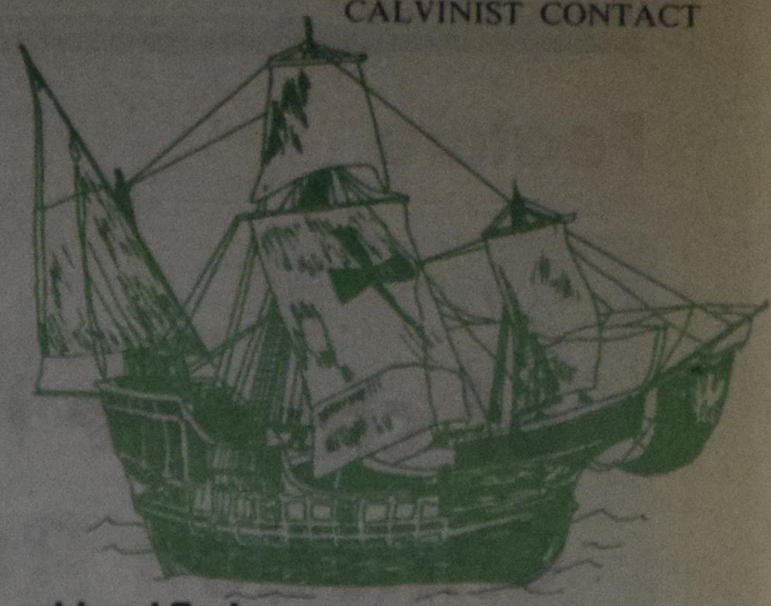
Poetry

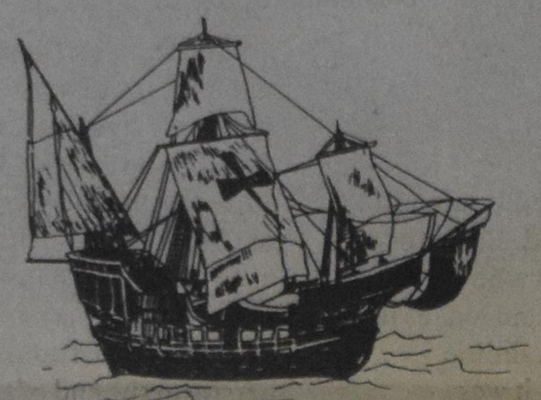




Columbus Sailed

1

Lord, from the broken
monastery of my mind
a kind of fortress
not unlike El Morro
with sorrow looking
out upon the sea
of history I chant
Gregorian monotones
about the bones bleached
white by third world fascism.



2

Suppose for example that Columbus had never sailed
and that the Mayas who had no need of the wheel
were left to their corn gods and their toil
(so we have no wheel, what of it?
we have complex calendrical calculations,
we have pottery, we have gold)

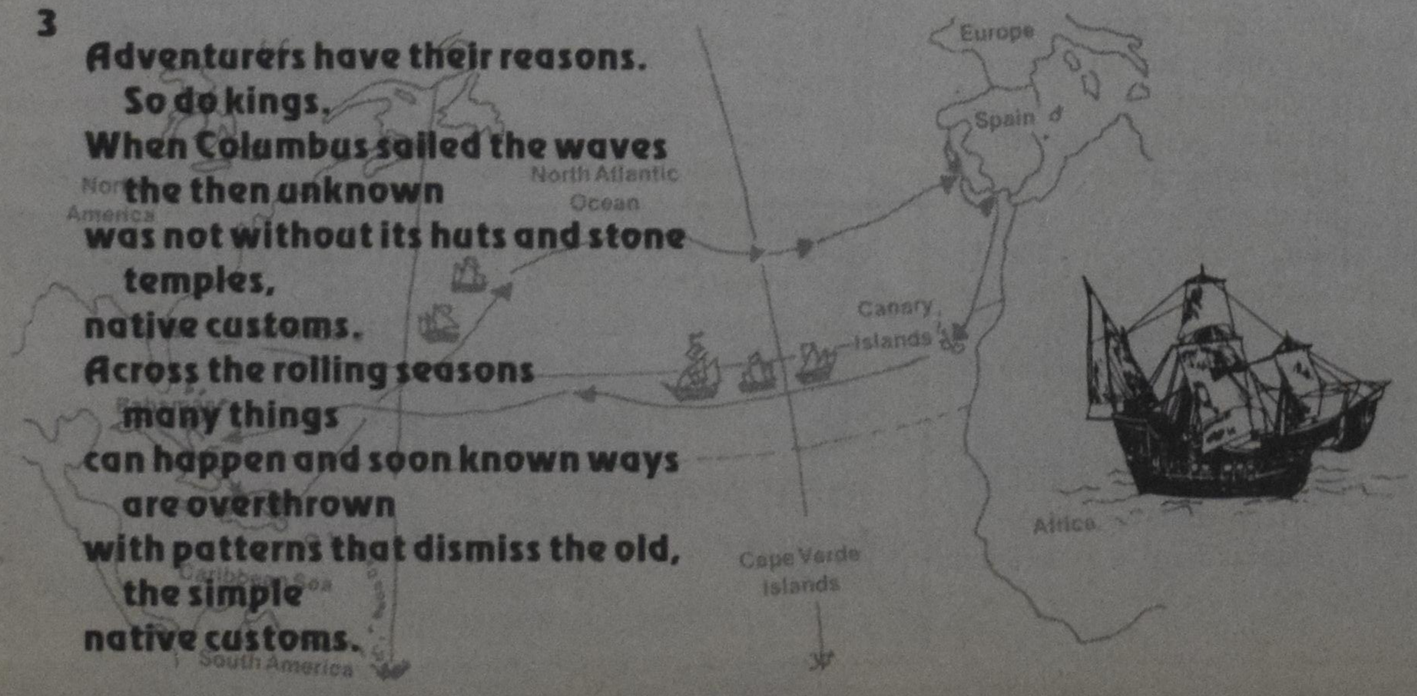
or suppose there was no dream of Utopia
starting with the visionary Thomas More
or suppose there was no horizon to follow nor to spoil

or that we all were home boys hugging the shore
of what we consider to be the only real
existence, experts in euphoria?
Suppose there was no quest for gold
with all the ensuing insinuations
that history brings? Adelante, adelante!

The unknown must harbour a strange appeal,
the unseen shores are full of mystery
and like Columbus we are sure to sail.

3

Adventurers have their reasons.
So do kings.
When Columbus sailed the waves
the then unknown
was not without its huts and stone
temples,
native customs.
Across the rolling seasons
many things
can happen and soon known ways
are overthrown
with patterns that dismiss the old,
the simple
native customs.



4

Columbus sailed for glory, gold and God:
across an ocean of unknown vastness swept
by winds and dreams he sailed to save and conquer.

At the tropical coast they dropped an anchor
where the future hung between promise and fraud.
The stone faces of Copan have wept

for unceasing centuries. The sacrifice is stretched taut
while a priest gaudy with feathers moves the knife,
cuts open the gut, reaches for the heart
still beating, rips and raises it to the sungod.

5

Not far from Las Ruinas de Copan
there is a greasy fried chicken stand
where I looked in Maria's eyes deep brown
confessing that Columbus had sailed wrong.

Maria with her black braid falling long
down her back and feet in sandals worn
knows how her people have suffered now so long
and that there is no comfort to be found

in recounting history. Dead days far gone
confess no mea culpa, find no form
of rehearsal. Maria, it's all wrong
but history's ambiguities are long.

6

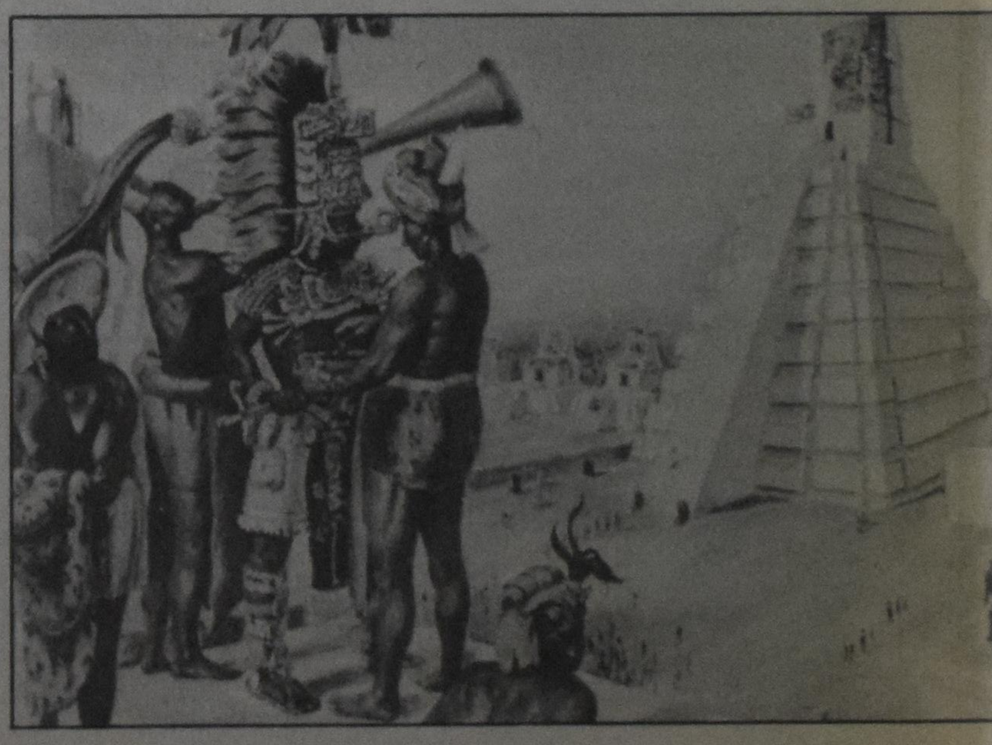
Then Columbus came and sat there, mystical
grey beard and looking pensive as he did
always: listen lads, he says, and tell
me if the fleet has lost her final quid

and leaning forward, eyes on fire he says:
is it too late to send the gold back
and — well — just find God again?

Frank Sawyer

NOTES:
Christopher (Xroferens) means Christ-bearer.
El Morro: Spanish fortress at the entrance of San Juan, Puerto Rico.
Adelante: "Forward!"
Copán: old Mayan temple and civic centre in northern Honduras near the border of Guatemala.
"Mea culpa": "I am guilty."

Frank Sawyer is a Christian Reformed missionary and professor at the Reformed seminary in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.



Preparing for a Mayan ceremony.

Feature

Winds of change in the Christian Reformed Church

1

A church in tension

John Bratt

It is a truism to say that life entails change. Personal,institutional change. Political, economic, social and religious change. And so the question invariably arises: Are those changes good or bad? Beneficial or baneful? Do they indicate progression or retrogression? Are they to be acclaimed or deplored?

There are those who say that the Christian Reformed Church in North America has declined in recent decades and is "on the skids." Some trace the origin of declension to 1924 when the CRC declared the doctrine of "common grace" to be Reformed.

Others insist that the doctrine of common grace is biblical and Reformed but claim that in post-1924 days the church failed to safeguard properly that doctrine by failing to put limitations upon it. As a consequence, so these critics maintain, the CRC in mid-century gave up a militant orthodox stance and adopted what it called a "positive mind," which in reality watered down the antithesis and gave too much leeway to common grace.

Others claim that [synodical] Report 44 on Biblical Authority ushered in a new hermeneutic and opened the door to further aberrations. Still others insist that a heavy dose of world conformity has diluted the antithesis still further and dulled the thrust of a transforming dynamic within the church. And it is these reputed digressions and compromises which, to their mind, have given rise to the problems that vex the church today.

'Inclusivistic theology'

History seems to be on their side. Many formerly conservative denominations have left their orthodox moorings and capitulated to the modern mind. But it should be observed that when retrogression occurred, as it did in some of the mainline denominations, it was accompanied by an inclusivistic theology. The perimeters of acceptable doctrine were appreciably widened.

Conflicting theologies were accommodated under one umbrella. Affirmations of the deity of Christ as well as its denial; salvation by grace and salvation by character; disclosure of truth by reason as valid as its disclosure through revelation; the miracles of Christ as real and authentic and those miracles interpreted naturalistically; the second coming of Christ as a future factual event and that coming identified with the gift of the Spirit and the spead of the Gospel — all of these became allowable options in some denominations.

It was that situation in the Presbyterian Church USA that led J. Gresham Machen, Robert Dick Wilson and others to form the new Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1937. An inclusivistic soteriology obtained in the mother church, so that a Clarence Macartney in Pittsburgh might proclaim salvation by grace through faith from his pulpit while at the same time a Pearl Buck on the China mission field could promote the false teaching of salvation by soap and sanitation.

It was that same latitude in the Hervormde Kerk in the Netherlands in the 19th century that impelled De Cock to lead the "Afscheiding" in 1934 and Kuyper the "Doleantie" in 1886.

No compromise on basic truths

There is no such inclusiveness on cardinal doctrines in the CRC. As far as fundamentals are concerned, there is unified adherence to the historic verities of the faith. The church affirms without reservation all of the truths embodied in the Apostles' Creed. There is no repudiation of any of the truths of the Reformed confessions. God's creation of the universe and human beings; the supremacy of the Word of God over reason and general revelation; the Trinity; the deity of Jesus Christ; atonement by the blood of Christ on the cross; salvation by grace through faith alone; miracles as supernatural realities; Christ coming in person at the end of time; the Great Resurrection and the Final Judgment — are themes that resound in Christian Reformed pulpits all over the land. There is no compromise on those basic truths.

It is interesting to note that John Calvin distinguishes between biblical truths. He grants that there are levels of biblical teaching and asserts that "not all the articles of true doctrine are of the same sort" (*Institutes*, IV, 1, 12). That statement has led McNeill and Battles in their translation to aver that the distinction between fundamental and less important articles is "woven into Calvin's thought." They immediately add, however, that it "is not definitely treated by him."

We do know that Calvin had a high view of the unity of Christ's Church as his Body, deplored what he called "capricious separation" from it, and counseled staying with the church "even though it swarmed with many faults." We do know, too, that it was his considered judgment that the Roman Catholic Church of his day had repudiated one of the indispensable doctrines in allowing for the intrusion of human merit into the process of salvation.

An interpretative issue

And we have his statement to the effect that the essential and non-negotiable articles include: "God is One; Christ is God and the Son of God; salvation rests in God's mercy and the like" (*Institutes*, IV, 1, 12). What more is encompassed in the last phrase *and the like* we do not know. We know that in his commentaries he interpreted the Apostle Paul to restrict church office to males but whether he would consign the "women in office" issue to the category of the lesser important we have no means of knowing.

I am quite sure that he would have called it an interpretative (hermeneutical) rather than a salvation issue. Because he made a point of it that all interpreters of Scripture, being finite and having minds that are not entirely immune from the cloudiness of sin, ought to have proper humility and frankly admit liability to error. He intimated so in his dedicatory letter to Simon Grynaeus in the preface to his commentary on Paul's letter to the church at Rome:

We have continually found...that there is by no means universal agreement even among those who are not wanting for zeal in godliness, or in piety and moderation, in discussing the mysteries of God. God has never so blessed his servants that they possessed full and perfect knowledge of every part of their subject. It is clever that his purpose in so limiting our knowledge was first, that we should be kept humble, and also that we should continue to have dealings with our fellows. Even though it were highly desirable, we are not to look in the present life for lasting agreement among us on the exposition of passages of Scripture. When therefore we depart from the views of our predecessors, we are not to be stimulated by any passion for innovation, impelled by any desire to slander others, aroused by any hatred, or prompted by any ambition. Necessity alone is to compel us. And we are to have no other object than that of doing good. (Institutes. *Thomas Torrance, eds.; Mackenzie, tr., Strassburg, Oct. 18, 1539.)*

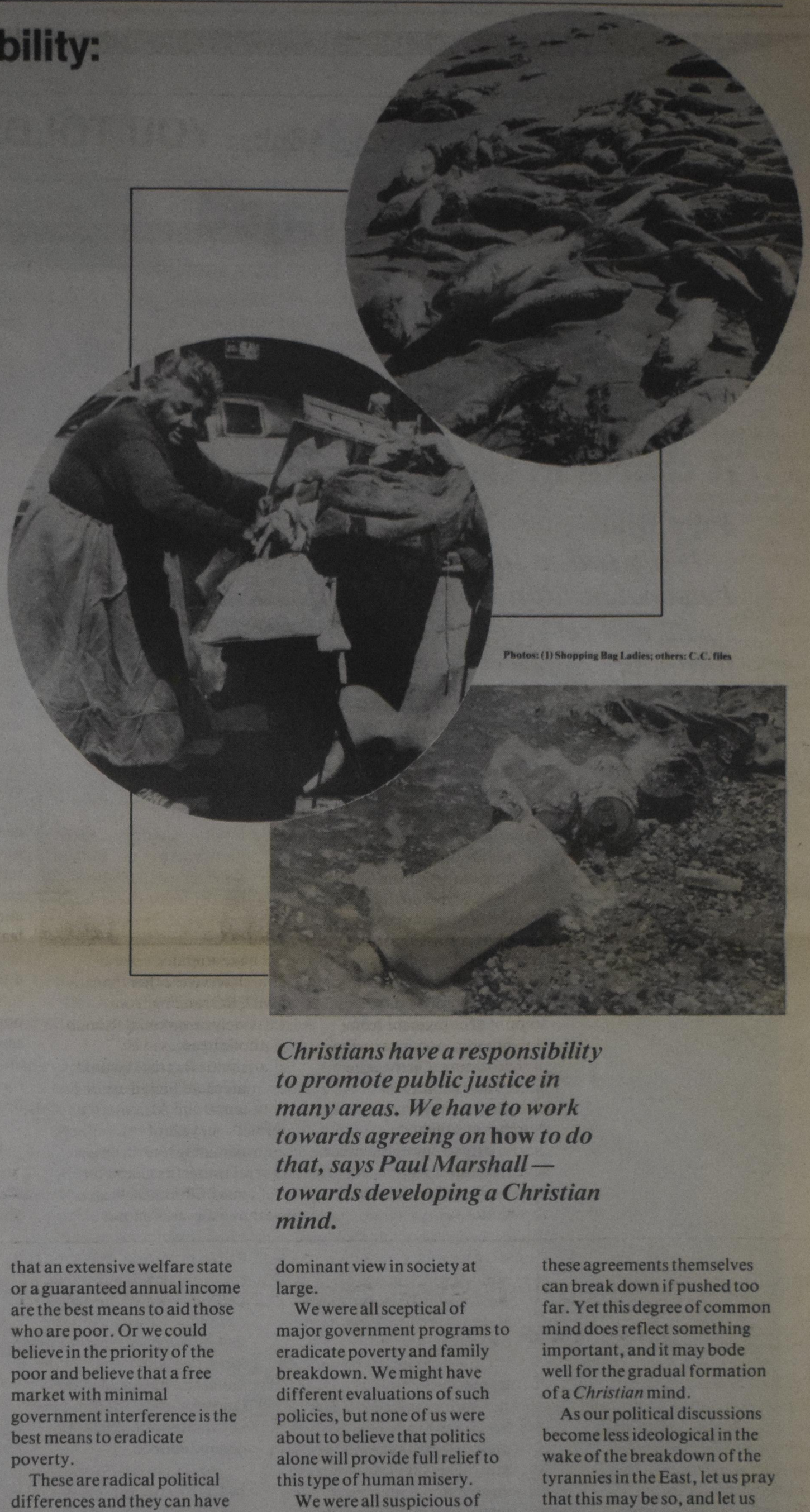
(This series of three articles will be continued next week.)

John Bratt is professor emeritus in theology at Calvin College. He lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Society

Christian political responsibility:

Coming together on the basics



Photos: (1) Shopping Bag Ladies; others: C.C. files

Christians have a responsibility to promote public justice in many areas. We have to work towards agreeing on* how *to do that, says Paul Marshall — towards developing a Christian mind.

Paul Marshall

Recently I was involved in a public round table discussion with Jim Wallis and Doug Bandow. Jim Wallis is well known as a Christian political activist, as the editor of *Sojourners*, as the author of a variety of books (including *Call to Conversion*), as a spokesperson for an anabaptist view of politics, and in current parlance, a "left-wing" of Christian political responsibility.

Doug Bandow is less well known, at least on this side of the border. He was on President Reagan's staff, now frequently writes columns for major U.S. newspapers, is a researcher for the Cato Institute, the author of *Beyond Good Intentions*, and is a spokesperson of a libertarian, less-government view of Christians' political responsibility.

I was there as a representative of (what I like to think of as a straight biblical view, but, to be more modest and realistic is) a Calvinist view that emphasizes the necessity of a plural society and a distinct view of the Christian responsibility of government. (As a plug, I am also the author of *Thine is the Kingdom: A Biblical View of Government*.)

Three Christian views

We were in Washington, D.C., as guests of the American Studies Program of the Christian College Coalition. The coalition is an organization of evangelical colleges: the program is a study centre seeking to educate students in Christian views of American policies (and placing them as interns in institutions as diverse as the White House and Amnesty International).

In its courses the program compares three Christian views of government. The views are represented by the books written by the members of the round table. The point of this get-together was to have the authors discuss their agreements and disagreements in an open and honest way so that the real points of difference could be pinned down. The resulting dialogue (if it didn't degenerate into name calling and histrionics) was to be published along with some representative writings.

Before the occasion I was worried — as much by fear that I might score points in a wrong way as by fear that I would be revealed as the fool that I am. But the event went well. It was open. It was fruitful. It was even fun.

Surprising amount of agreement

The main thing that surprised and cheered me was the amount of agreement among us. Although sitting next to people who, in my grumpy and self-righteous moods, I dismiss as either left-over '60s radicals or jingoistic, greedy Reaganites, I found myself continually saying, "Yes"; "Good"; "I agree"; "I'll have to think about that again." This was surprising and refreshing.

Of course it is possible to agree with anyone if you stay at a general enough level. We all believe that the care of our politics must be our Christian commitment, that God loves people, that the state must not be seen as the solution for all problems, that the Scriptures give a priority for asking how policies affect the poor.

However, we can agree on these types of things and still have radical political disagreements. For example, we could believe the poor should be a priority and believe that an extensive welfare state or a guaranteed annual income are the best means to aid those who are poor. Or we could believe in the priority of the poor and believe that a free market with minimal government interference is the best means to eradicate poverty.

These are radical political differences and they can have more practical effect than all our more abstract agreements. And such differences are held by Christians of good will on either side. Clearly, then, our agreements, though real, must be taken with a pinch (or two) of salt.

Toward a Christian mind

But the agreements in the discussion went beyond mere generalities or superficialities. We were all critical of a pro-choice position on abortion. This illustrates the fact that the dominant view of evangelicals, of whatever political stripe, is far more pro-life than is the dominant view in society at large.

We were all sceptical of major government programs to eradicate poverty and family breakdown. We might have different evaluations of such policies, but none of us were about to believe that politics alone will provide full relief to this type of human misery.

We were all suspicious of attempts to see society as one, overarching human community which resolves its problems by means of the state. Instead we emphasized the importance of "civil society," of the myriad of free and independent human interactions in churches, homes and neighbourhoods.

We were all also critical of the allies' prosecution of the war in the Persian Gulf. From quite different viewpoints we believed that it did not meet Christian criteria for responsible government conduct.

Of course there were many disagreements as well, and these agreements themselves can break down if pushed too far. Yet this degree of common mind does reflect something important, and it may bode well for the gradual formation of a *Christian* mind.

As our political discussions become less ideological in the wake of the breakdown of the tyrannies in the East, let us pray that this may be so, and let us work patiently in listening and talking with one another so that it may become so.

Paul Marshall is senior member in political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

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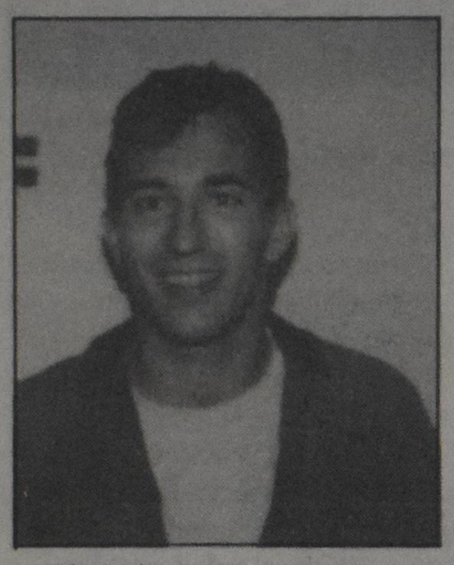
Young Adults: YOU TOLD US...

Bill Fledderus

What do Christians in their 20s think about the environment, personal devotions, different styles of worship, the media, and the Dutch-Canadian subculture? For answers to these and other questions, keep an eye out for this new column by young Canadians from across Canada: It's called **Young Adults: YOU TOLD US....**

This weeks's question: How much experience have you had with worship services in churches outside your own denomination? Can you compare the two?

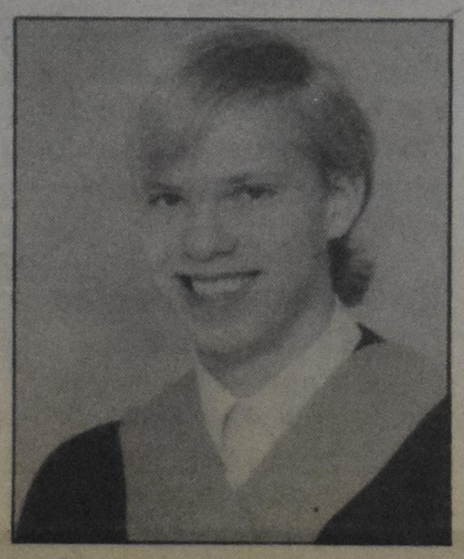
Ian VanDeventer, second year sociology student at The King's College, Edmonton:



I have had friends from different denominations and have visited many churches of the Baptist, Lutheran, United, Anglican, and Pentecostal denominations, in addition to many different Christian Reformed churches. The services are often quite different than my local CRC but I would have difficulty in "rating" them compared to my church as you ask me to do. Personally, I like quite an informal worship service and, therefore, I don't get the same amount of enjoyment from worshipping in a more formal or rigid setting. On the other hand, I also do not feel completely comfortable in churches of a highly charismatic orientation, either. I guess you could say my church is in-between the two ends of the spectrum.

However, my preference for a particular worship style or setting does not mean that I regard styles that are dissimilar to mine as inferior. We Christians all serve the same God and I have seen strong Christians in every church setting I have experienced. No human can say that any one style or denomination is better than another.

Greg Cruson, second year business administration student at the University of Regina:



I have attended several church services other than my own CRC ranging from extremely ceremonial Roman Catholic to excessively charismatic Baptist. I would estimate that I have attended between 10 and 20 non-CRC services per year of approximately five different types. I prefer the Christian Reformed Church in Regina because it focuses on the fellowship and family, making the service more enjoyable. There is also more variety in the services, making each one interesting. The non-CRC services I have attended were interesting but I would not want to go there all the time.

Vickey de Haan, bank employee in Winnipeg, Manitoba:

As a person who did not grow up within the Christian Reformed Church, I have attended many non-CRC worship services. I really enjoy the worship services at the CRC where I attend now, and I'd say that I also attend non-CRC worship services about four to six times a year. I don't know that I consciously rate these non-CRC services or compare them to my own church, but generally I feel good to be a part of any Christian worship service that allows people to express joyful praise to God, and to have an opportunity to learn something from God's Word. In most cases where I've attended a non-CRC worship service, I've really enjoyed the opportunity to worship the same God with people who, although I may not know all of them by name or face, are my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Michael John Kooy, fifth year English student at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ont.:

I think Reformed churches could benefit from bringing some of the evangelical churches' charismatic flair into our worship services.

For example, the evangelicals' dependence on non-traditional musical forms, (e.g. drums, classical guitar and simple choruses) makes for lively and exciting worship, often with a view to involving one's emotions. Sure, it can be a little contrived at times, but I found clapping hands to the beat of the drums a complement to the more rigid music of my home church.

In addition, I appreciate the evangelicals' liberal use of personal testimonies in worship services. I have often been encouraged in my own faith when young people, parents and older church members talked about theirs. Such public sharing is no substitute for a good sermon (but may be for a bad one).

'Stay-in-school' theme promoted through bus shelter posters

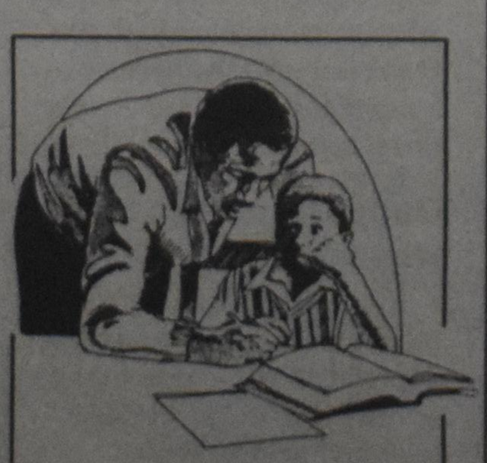
OTTAWA (Canadian Scene) — As part of a campaign to persuade young Canadians to complete their education, the federal government is displaying posters in bus shelters in 28 cities, from Victoria, B.C., to St. John's, Nfld.

The posters echo the theme developed in a recent television commercial: the bleak future a young person faces when trying to find work without a high school diploma. Posters include a toll-free telephone number, 1-800-661-2525. By calling that number young people and their parents can obtain information on the consequences of dropping out of school and the harsh realities of today's labour market. The message tells callers, "You've called the right place. Dropping out is no way out." The caller can leave his or her name and number so that further information can be sent to him or her.

Today, 30 per cent of young Canadians leave secondary school before completing their studies. According to Minister of State for Youth, Fitness and Amateur Sport Pierre H. Cadieux, this is one of the highest levels in any industrialized country. "This rate directly affects our country's ability to compete effectively in international markets," Cadieux states.

The government's Stay-in-School Initiative, launched in 1990 has earmarked $296.4 million for programs relating to youth and education.

LOOK FOR OUR EDUCATION ISSUE FEBRUARY 21, 1992



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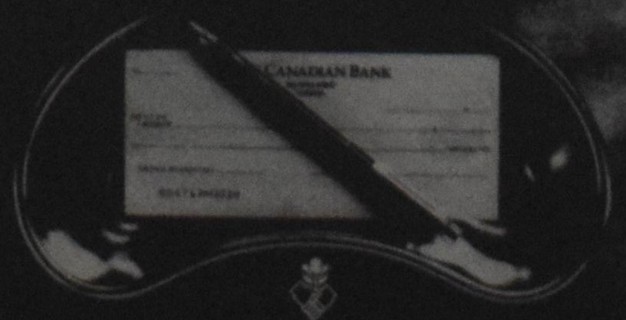

THE KIDNEY FOUNDATION OF CANADA

Education

ICS convocation: A colourful and special affair

Reinder J. Klein

Call me romantic, but I like to see normally quite sensible grown-ups dressed in medieval garb. There's something stately in those dark and flowing robes with their brilliantly coloured bands and patches, something quaintly disarming in those limp and quite useless hoods, something rich in those striking colours.

In our bleak atmosphere of synthetic sounds, bland public personalities, homogenized beliefs and stark straight lines I still love those soft and silken tassled caps, those velvety gowns and the earnest-looking academics in them. And the brooding shadows of elegant chapels with their liquid organ music can move me as no modern stadium and raucus rock group ever will.

So, yes, I loved the ceremony, the pomp and circumstance of the convocation held by the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) in Toronto's Knox College Chapel last November 15. Having spent much of that day strapped down inside a crowded metal tube hurtling back east at a cruising altitude of 33,000 feet, I liked this time-warp back into a more sedate setting rooted in history.

Photo: Reinder Klein

New senior member Robert Sweetman is a medieval scholar.

Woman graduate makes history

There was the processional entry of solemn dignitaries, grave scholars and serene graduates, stepping with measured pace to the organ music of Lully's "March" toward their reserved seats up front. There was the welcome and opening prayer of board chair Reinders, the responsive Scripture reading led by Senator Carvill, the robust singing of the hymn "Rejoice! Sing Praise to your Redeemer."

And then there was the conferring of degrees by Chancellor Schouls, President Fernhout and Registrar Hart. All five women among the eight graduates were present; the three men being no longer in Canada were not.

Photo: Reinder Klein

ICS graduates Janet Wesselius, Barbara Douglas, Maj-Len Wallace, Janice Leach, Carrie Warkentin.

In keeping with the international flavour of the ICS, these graduates represented Korea, Canada, England and the USA. And Canada's Janet Wesselius made ICS history by being the first woman to graduate with a program concentation in pure philosophy.

Sweetman's miracles

Then it was time for the Institute's new senior member, Dr. Robert Sweetman, to deliver his inaugural lecture. Introduced by President Fernhout as a graduate of Calvin College, alumnus of ICS, brilliant scholar of Toronto's Pontifical Institute en route to a University of Toronto Ph.D. Bob Sweetman is a medievalist who, on this night of caps and gowns, looked very much the part.

His lecture, titled "Tracing the Shape of Wonder, or: Medieval Miracles for a Post-Modern Age," made the point that medieval scholars (like post-modern thinkers today) saw limits to the power of created reason and contingent subjectivity. God is the true reason and centre of things. Working within his framework, people can embrace the opportunities of a new age without fear of its enticements.

While this was no doubt a memorable evening for Bob Sweetman and the graduating students, it was also a special occasion for Dr. Hendrik Hart and his wife, Anita. Hart was the first full-time employee of the ICS, and on this night his and Anita's 25 years of devoted service were publicly acknowledged and celebrated.

Chairperson Reinders thanked Hart on behalf of the ICS community for his dedication and extraordinary contributions. He also mentioned that his own appreciation for Hart had deepened into friendship as together they had sought to deal with complex matters.

The Harts responded with gracious words of their own, antiphonally reading from a prepared text and singling out for special thanks their close friends and long time ICS associates, Jim and Jean Olthuis.

Reception

The ceremony ended with the hymn "Nations, Clap Your Hands" and a prayer by trustee Dr. Wendy Helleman. Following the recessional a reception was held during which the invited guests had an opportunity to convey personal congratulations to the celebrants.

A pleasantly festive air, punctuated by distinctly un-medieval camera flashes, prevailed throughout this warm and colourful affair. For us romantics, this was a great evening.

Retirement funds benefit churches and Christian schools

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — More than $14 million in retirement and savings funds is now on loan as mortgage money to Christian Reformed churches and to Christian schools at bargain interest rates, says Harry Houtman. The fund grew by $3 million in the past year, he reports.

Houtman administers the CRC Extension Fund and the CRC Community RRSP programs which currently charge churches and schools 7.5 per cent interest, while paying lenders 7.5 per cent. The uniformity of these figures reflects the low cost of administration. Houtman notes that the prime rate is now 8.00 and Canada Savings Bonds pay 7.5 per cent to lenders.

Sheltering income from income tax is the major reason people use RRSPs for their savings. RRSPs are one of the few ways of reducing taxable income on one's annual tax return. Most other deductions come in the form of tax credits-amounts subtracted from the tax to be paid. A change in government procedures this year allows Revenue Canada to inform taxpayers how much RRSP money they can shelter from tax for their 1991 returns. RRSP deposits can be made until February 28 for the preceding year.

The revised Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) program is also more attractive now. By age 71 a person must change all RRSP funds into cash, annuity or RRIF. The RRIF allows a flexible withdrawal of money each year, with a certain minimum. The CRC fund handles RRIF accounts, too, so a person with an RRSP in the fund can simply change it over to an RRIF.

Houtman cautions that not everyone can save taxes with an RRSP. People who have a modest income but own substantial investments, such as farmers or owners of small businesses, may actually find that their income increases when they sell their assets and retire. The idea of an RRSP is that you shelter income from tax when your income is high and then receive it at a time of low income and its accompanying lower tax rate.

Donating is wise two ways

Even withdrawing some money from an RRSP to make a special donation to a church or other charity can be done without financial loss, Houtman points out. For example, a person whose income for a given year is under $28,000 is taxed at a rate of about 26 per cent, varying somewhat with the province of residence. But a donation carries a tax credit of 44 per cent. This means that with a gift of $3,000, for instance, a person would gain $540 from making the donation, even after paying income tax on the money taken out of the RRSP. Even if one's income is as high as $56,000 a year, the tax rate of about 40 per cent is lower than the 44 per cent tax credit.

Houtman calls attention to the fact that persons over 65 years old receive a tax credit of up to $1,000 for income from pensions other than Canada Pension or Canada's Old Age Security. It's wise, he says, if you don't have other pension income, to invest in an annuity or RRIF. If you don't have pension income after age 65 you will not receive the tax credit.

People who have RRSP or RRIF programs with commercial institutions can easily transfer those funds to the CRC Extension Fund, says Houtman. His office can provide the information. He says there are currently 12 churches and schools on the waiting list, with their borrowing approved in the total amount of $3.5 million.

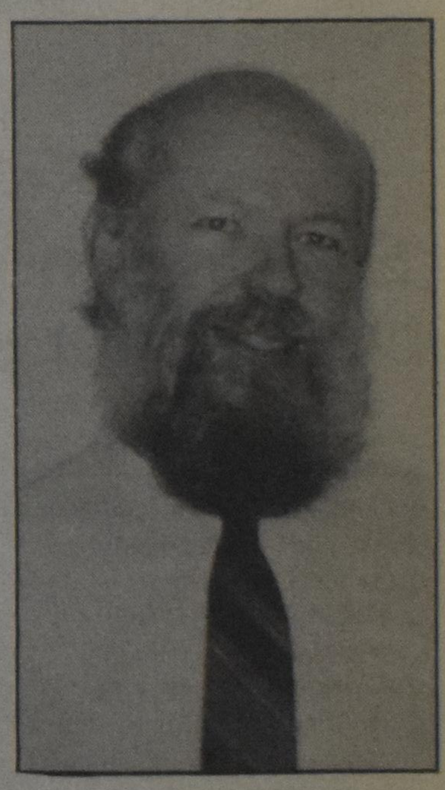

Photo: Robert VanderVennen

Harry Houtman administers secure investments in churches and Christian schools.

The fund was started in 1970 by Classis Toronto. In 1982 it began its RRSP program in addition to a fund of about $2 million in which people can invest their savings until they need it themselves. The fund is directed by a board of which Tom De Vries of Orillia, Ont., is chair. The fund is supervised by Classis Toronto though it now operates nationwide.

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Finance/Education

Getting income from your RRSP

There are numerous examples in the Bible that demonstrate the wisdom of planning. Having been placed in a position of power in ancient Egypt, Joseph used the insight given to him by God to set aside a portion of the grain crops for seven good years in order to be able to provide food in the following seven drought and famine years.

Registered Retirement Savings Plans (RRSPs) were put in place to help Canadians save for retirement. Putting away some of your income during your healthy working years so that you have some Income when you are not working is good financial planning.

Much is written about RRSPs and their various aspects. We will address the options available when it comes time to take money from your RRSP in retirement. You could take it all out in cash before age 71. But if you want your plan to provide income over the long term, you have two basic choices.

First, you can purchase an annuity which will provide income to age 90 or for life, if you desire. It can be based on either of the spouses' ages.

A couple who are both 65 years old with $30,000 could receive a monthly income from a life annuity that would continue to the longest survivor and for a minimum of 10 years. The monthly amount would be approximately $285. Of course, this monthly amount is based on a quotation that changes every day; and with interest rates falling, annuity rates are falling.

Secondly, you could transfer your RRSP to a Registered Retirement Income Fund. If you turn your RRSP into a RRIF you must receive at least a minimum annual payment. This payment is calculated by taking the value of the RRIF and dividing it by the number of years to age 90.

For example, if you are 65 years old and have $30,000 in your RRSP, and transfer it to a RRIF you would have to accept a minimum annual payment initially of $30,000 divided by 25 which equals $1,200 (or $100 per month). Although in this example the income is less initially than the annuity payment, it increases over the years to keep your purchasing power in line with inflation.

Various options

You do not necessarily have to take the minimum payment. Recent changes in RRIF legislation permit one to take *any* amount greater than the minimum. You could elect to take the same initial payment as the life annuity as one of many options. Of course, not all RRIFs available in the marketplace permit this. The chart below shows two examples of RRIFs and compares them to an annuity — based on a $30,000 RRSP for our 65-year-old couple.

One type of RRIF recently quoted a guaranteed interest return of 10.5 per cent to age 90. The minimum payments would start at approximately $100 a month and would grow each year. The difference between the investment return in the RRIF and the actual payments will be the amount by which the RRIF changes in value year by year. By 2001, you would be receiving $271 a month and by the time you were 80, you would receive $447. These numbers are based on current rates which change on a daily basis.

Another type of RRIF that is available is an equity-based RRIF. These would employ a mutual fund or group of mutual funds as the investment. The largest mutual fund in Canada has a track record over the past 20 years in excess of 15 per cent on a compound basis. For purposes of comparison, factor in an average 15 per cent investment return. Keep in mind that returns on equity mutual funds are not guaranteed and that past performance is no guarantee of future performance.

From the equity-based RRIF you would initially receive minimum payments of $100 a month. By 2001, you would be receiving $405 per month and by the time you were 80, you would receive $814 monthly.

Predictable but irrevocable

The charts show the numbers in more detail. If you look at them you can see that if you add up the total payments to age 90, the annuity would have paid a total of $85,500. The 10.5 per cent RRIF would have paid out $127,268 and the 15 per cent equity RRIF a total of $255,345. Keep in mind that summing up the payouts in this fashion does not account for the time value of money.

In summary, the annuity has the advantage of income past age 90, it is predictable and initially has a higher payment. The disadvantage is that your investment decision is irrevocable. If the last survivor dies after the guarantee period expires, this will be nothing left for the estate. The most significant disadvantage is that there is no inflation protection.

RRIFs in many cases have a great deal more flexibility. You choose the rate of payout each year. The examples shown here are the minimum payments per year. You can increase the payments if you wish provided that your particular RRIF contract permits it.

Certain types of RRIFs also allow you to change the investments inside of it. For example, you can alternate between Canada Savings Bonds and a common stock mutual fund within the RRIF any year you desire. If you die before age 90 there would be an asset left to your spouse, estate or favourite charity.

You are permitted to have a combination of a number of RRIFs and any number of annuities. Your choice will depend on your own set of circumstances. In an era in which depending on government pensions is becoming a risky strategy, making the right decisions on RRSP and RRIF plans may be the right strategy in dealing with this risk of financial drought.

Year	Age	10.5 per cent RRIF		15 per cent RRIF		Life Annulty	
		Min. Pmt.	Accumulated	Min. Pmt.	Accumulated	Pmt.	Accumulated
1991	65	$100	$1200	$100	$1200	$285	$3420
1996	70	165	9376	201	10505	285	17100
2001	75	271	22846	405	29220	285	34200
2006	80	447	45038	814	66860	285	51300
2011	85	737	81599	1637	142569	285	68400
2016	90	1098	127268	2862	255345	285	85500

Leonard Bick is an Ancaster, Ont., based financial planner.

Third group joins Jewish call for Ontario independent school funding

Bill Fledderus

TORONTO — A new group of parents has filed for intervenor status in a recent court challenge by the Canadian Jewish Congress which calls for public funding of Jewish independent schools.

The Jewish Congress, whose case will be heard May 25, has already been joined by the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools, a co-applicant which feels that the case has implications for all religious-based independent schools. (See C.C. Nov. 22, 1991, p. 2.)

The intervenor status requested by the new group will allow it to make a presentation to the court during the Jewish Congress's case. The parents wish to present their disagreement with the Jewish Congress' willingness to accept funding for a "secular" portion of the education given in a religious-based independent school.

"We do not go along with the proposed religious/secular split," explains Gerald Vandezande. "We argue that all education is value- or religion-based and that no education is value-free or neutral."

Vandezande is public policy co-ordinator for the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education (CRFE), a lobby group comprised of people from various Christian denominations which supports the parents.

The CRFE is a member of the Ontario Multi-Faith Coalition for Equity in Education, and many involve that group in its presentation during the Jewish Congress's case.

The CRFE will also be filing its own application in the courts, requesting a court order that the sponsorship of alternative, religious-based schools by public school boards, provided they operate on a voluntary, non-discriminatory basis, is constitutionally permissible.

"All parents in Canada should have the freedom to educate their children in accordance with their beliefs and values," according to Vandezande.

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Advice/Education

Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

Please give me your perspective on a dilemma which has my mind racing in circles without any solution in sight. I value your opinion as Christians with open minds who understand a lot about relationships.

A few months ago, through my work, I met a young man from Australia whom I'll call Phil. We have hiked, explored, debated and worked together. His wonderful love of life and people makes him a terrific friend and colleague. He has a clear sense of what's important to him, such as friendships, a simple lifestyle, good music, the outdoors; he has a poetic soul. We are strongly attracted to each other and are feeling the first stirrings of love. There is just one problem. He is not a Christian. His own spiritual perspective is in evolution right now. He has concluded that there must be a god but he has no concept of a personal and interactive God.

I have always felt that Christians should marry Christians, but I've never had any cause to question this belief. It strikes me that the church has many dogmas which Christ never demanded. So I feel wary. If I must let Phil go because Christ demands it, that is something I'll have to handle. It would be the biggest sacrifice by far that I have ever had to make for my faith. But first I am trying to discern if this teaching is truth or just one more of the simplistic, legalistic rules that the church has accumulated.

I am convinced that persons need to be spiritually compatible in order to build a life together. The irony is that I feel more at one with him than anyone I have ever met before, including all the Christian men I've dated.

There is an additional complication. Before I met Phil, I occasionally dated a young man whom I'll call Brent, whose career goal is to teach in a Christian high school. He has let me know that he is quite interested in a committed relationship with a view to getting married.

How can I describe him? He's a hardworking guy with a strong sense of Christian vocation. We have lots of fun hiking, dancing, being active together. But intellectually and spiritually I find myself a bit frustrated. Perhaps because he has always attended Christian schools his world seems so small. Big issues to him are irrelevant to me and vice-versa. This may change as he does some practice teaching in different schools. Then the world may look more challenging. But in the meantime I am left with the fear of being squeezed into Christian Reformed conformity with no challenge or freedom to think issues through from first principles, all the conclusions being foregone.

So there's Brent who strikes me as a very secure but unexciting option. Then there's Phil who has my heart's vote although he represents an unpredictable future. And finally there's the option of being alone again, which is not so bad either.

I know I've given you a lot to comment on. I would especially value your opinion on whether you think Phil is even an option considering the fact that he's not a Christian.

Dear Tugged Two Ways:

So you have felt your heart tugged in two directions between passion and stability, adventure and security. How hard it must be to be torn like that. Especially when a whole future is at stake and your upbringing seems to limit your options.

It occurs to us that Brent's world is too small for you and Phil's world view is too vague for you and that neither man meets the criteria that *you* have set for yourself. We know you mention the demands of church dogma and your restrictive background. But when all things are said and done, we hear you saying that you want to meet and possibly marry a committed Christian whose way of experiencing and savouring life is as full as your own. Why settle for less and deal with the inevitable frustration that either one of these men would bring into your life?

We don't mind telling you that we enjoy our own married life together so intensely because we share an adventurous spirit, love to take risks, and are one in our faith. We keep coming back to friendship and kindred spirits as key emotional/psychological factors in determing whether two people are meant for each other. Undoubtedly the Apostle Paul had the same things in mind in I Cor. 7: 39b and II Cor. 6: 14.

Love is complex enough without all the other complications with which you struggle. Consider this: if it's this hard before you marry, how difficult won't it be after you marry either one of your choices when you really get to know each other! Look for a relationship that flows naturally into marriage and be on guard for anything that makes you uncomfortable, that feels forced. Too many couples silence their doubts and deny their hesitations and live to regret it. It's the difference between flowing one way and being tugged two ways.

We're so glad that you are at peace with yourself as an individual. We hear of too many young women whose urge to marry cripples their self-development and personal happiness. Obviously you won't be propelled either into a lacklustre alliance or into a spiritually turbulent relationship just for the sake of having a man in your life.

Write to: P&M
c/o Calvinist Contact
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St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam Da Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Movement towards a Reformed Christian university painfully slow

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — It's not exactly a secret, but not many people know that talks have been going on for a Reformed university in North America.

The talk was started in 1984 by Rev. Derk Pierik, a campus chaplain at the University of Toronto, who at the time was a member of the board of Calvin College and Seminary in Grand Rapids, Mich., and of the board of the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

Pierik argued that the entire Christian schooling program "needs university level instruction, research, curricula and publication work that is solidly rooted in biblical-reformational soil." High quality Christian leadership for the Reformed community and for the larger Christian community is desperately needed to counter the non-Christian spirits of our age and to shape a Christian worldview that compels Christian practice, he added.

Since that time the presidents of colleges, most of which have a relation with the Christian Reformed Church, have been meeting at least once a year to discuss starting co-ordinated university work. In 1989 they agreed on a 19-page paper that outlined the concept, principles, a developmental model and steps toward implementation.

The plan focuses on graduate education, that is, programs for students who have completed a bachelor's degree. Of greatest interest is a master's program in the field of education. Calvin has a Master of Arts in Teaching degree, the ICS has a program but not a Master of Education degree, and Dordt College wants to move into this area. "Would it be possible for at least these schools to get together and have one very good program, pooling the best available professors, especially aimed at teachers with some elementary school teaching experience?" those behind the plan asked.

Students would like a Reformed university

The interest is there from the potential students, says President Harry Fernhout of ICS. At the request of the committee, ICS conducted a survey of over 1,200 college graduates and half of them expressed interest in doing graduate study in the next five years, mostly in the field of education.

Photo: Robert VanderVennen

Dr. Harry Fernhout and Rev. Derk Pierik see a future with a Reformed Christian university.

But it's hard to get colleges to work together. Each guards its own turf jealously. Many smaller colleges have internal issues to keep them from being very active in joint activities, such as The King's College moving to a new campus. Redeemer College, though it does not have its own graduate programs, brokers summer education courses that carry graduate and undergraduate credit at Calvin and are applied to the Christian Teacher's Certificate in Ontario.

Indeed at this point progress toward a combined university program is very slow, "glacial," as Fernhout puts it. President John Hulst of Dordt College, who chairs the meetings and passionately wants to have this communal idea succeed, agrees that movement has stalled.

Fernhout admits, "Progress is at a make or break stage — either it gets beyond a fine idea to looking at some specifics, or the idea will die." It was Fernhout who brought to the latest meeting various proposals to move it forward.

Hulst is strongly interested in the international aspects of a university program. Based on Dordt's international contacts and a trip that Hulst made to Korea in October, he sees many Christian students from developing countries wanting to study at a Reformed university in North America.

The curriculum should stress foundational issues in scholarship, says Hulst, but fields like elementary education also need to emphasize practical issues. There will be a focus on the "philosophy of" the subject and its Christian foundations if the teaching and research are not to be dualistic, splitting Christian worldview from the crucial concepts of the field.

Another problem is money. How are schools which hardly balance their own budgets each year going to come up with money for a university? Yes, that's a problem, said Derk Pierik at a recent meeting. But then he estimated that the Reformed Christian community spends $80 to $100 million a year on undergraduate education and only around $1 million a year — the ICS budget — on graduate education. More money is needed for graduate education, he says.

This Reformed university could be kick-started with $50,000 to $100,000 from someone who saw the project as important. With that the 19-page paper could take on some flesh, Pierik asserts.

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Thanks

DREISE:
We are very appreciative of everyone who remembered us with cards, expressions of sympathy, and words of Christian comfort and faith in the days following the death of our dearly loved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, John F. Dreise.
We thank God for a great fellowship of believers.
Anje Dreise and family.

Birth

HAMMINGA:
With praise to the Lord, the giver of all life we, Evert and Anne Hamminga of Tillsonburg, Ont., announce the birth of another grandchild,

JAMES ROBERT VAN HAM

born on Dec. 19, 1991.
Happy parents are John and Pamela Van Ham.
James is a little brother for Nathan.
Home address: 6-225 Queen St., Sarnia, ON N7T 2R7

Save money by using the classifieds.

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Harmina and Gerrit Willem VanArragon on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

1942 January 23 1992
We are happy to announce that our parents,

HARMINA and GERRIT WILLEM VANARRAGON

will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Jan. 23, 1992. We are thankful to God for what they have meant to us and to the Christian community during these years and it is our prayer that they will continue to experience God's love and his nearness in the years to come.
With our love and congratulations:
Jenny & Martin Oldengarm — Harriston
Geertje & Charles Turk — Narita City, Japan
MaryAnn & Jerry Kingma — Strathroy
Gary & Gretchen VanArragon — Guelph
Leo & Cathy VanArragon — Belleville
Harma & Raymond Badgley — Trenton
Wilma & Ralph Linder — St. Charles, Ill.
Wayne Collinson — Strathroy
Mike Parker — Vancouver
Dan Fletcher — Oakville
and 19 grandchildren.
An open house for our parents will be held at the Westmount Chr. Ref. Church, Drury Lane, Strathroy, Ont., on Feb. 1, 1992, from 2-4 p.m.
In lieu of gifts, to commemorate this celebration, donations may be made to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank or a similar relief agency.
Mailing address: 400 Dominion St. #60, Strathroy, ON N7G 3G8

Obituaries

On Dec. 23, 1991, our heavenly Father took unto himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather,

WILLEM (BILL) VANDERVAART
at the age of 71.
Sadly missed by:
His wife: Corrie (Cornelia VanZoest)
His children:
Stuart & Margaret VanderVaart
Joyce & Evert VanDoorn
Laura & Clarence Zantingh
Fred & Nina VanderVaart
Margaret & Fred Rekman
and 17 grandchildren.
"Our comfort comes from the Lord, who has been our dwelling place throughout all generations" (Ps. 90).
Correspondence address: C.M. VanderVaart, 683 Scott St., Kincardine, ON N2Z 1T2

Anniversaries

Nieuw Amsterdam Athens
1952 January 22 1992
With praise and thanksgiving to our Lord, we celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents,

WALTER AND HENNIE HEUVING
(nee Bouwman)

May God continue to bless you and keep you in his loving care.
With lots of love from your children and grandchildren:
Jane & Bob Andree — Dunnville, Ont.
Ann, Lynette, Julie, Chantale
Rita & Paul Kloosterman — Athens, Ont.
Heather, Brian, Pamela, Valerie, Kevin
Ginus & Jean Heuving — Athens, Ont.
Beverly, Steven, Sharon, Jennifer
Linda & Lubbert Noort — Brockville, Ont.
Justin, Eric
Shirley & Hugh MacMillan — Athens, Ont.
Derrick
Home address: R.R. #2, Lyndhurst, ON K0E 1N0

Beilen Brantford
1947 January 28 1992
"For such is our God, our God forever and ever; he will guide us until death" (Ps. 48: 14).

GEUCHIEN and AALTIEN SCHIPPER
(nee Oldengarm)

With thankfulness to the Lord for his rich blessings, we, their children, wish to congratulate Mom and Dad on their 45th wedding anniversary.
Bill & Barbara Rose — St. Johns, Nfld.
Adam, Ian
Wilma — Vancouver, B.C.
Allison, Eric
Alice & Stu — Carcross, Yukon
Aaron, Emma
Peter & Trudy — Bradford, Ont.
Darryl, Melissa
John & Beth — Dorr, Mich.
Jeremy, Joshua, Jasper
Ralph & Judy — Waterford, Ont.
Jeanette & Albert — Kitchener, Ont.
Amanda, Michael, Richard
Open house will be held Jan. 25, 1992, from 1-4:30 p.m. at the Chr. Ref. Church hall, 17 Patterson Ave., Brantford, Ont.
Home address: 94 White Owl Cres. Brantford, ON N3P 1A2,
(519) 753-9452.

Anniversaries

1952 January 23 1992
With joy and thanksgiving, we are pleased to announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

CORNELIS and ALBERDINA VAN GINKEL
(nee Zoer)

We pray that God will bless you with many more years of happiness together and with us.
Ed & Aileen Van Ginkel — Oakville, Ont.
Alison, Michael, Mark
Nancy & Henry Kloepper — Scarborough, Ont.
Carolyne, Kirsten
Marian & Gerry Steggerda — Oakville, Ont.
Laurie, Brian, Michelle
Annette & Vince Oppedisano — Thornhill, Ont.
Bianca, Catherine
Robert Van Ginkel — Willowdale, Ont.
Eric Van Ginkel — Willowdale, Ont.
An open house will be held at their home on Saturday, Jan. 25, 1992, at 7 p.m. Best wishes only.
Home address: 33 Charlton Blvd., Willowdale, ON M2M 1C1,
(416) 221-7517.

Ruinerwold, Dr. Wellandport, Ont.
1952 January 25 1992
We praise God for his faithfulness and thank him for the blessings he has bestowed on our parents and grandparents as they hope to celebrate, D.V., their 40th wedding anniversary.

JOHN and FIEN VELDMAN
(nee Vanderveen)

As we reflect on the past 40 years, we thank God for his guidance, strength and love. We also thank Dad and Mom, Opa and Oma, for their love, continual thoughtfulness and care for us.
Hilda & Hans Dam — Fenwick, Ont.
Carolyn, Debbie, Bryan, Kristie
Jake & Clara Veldman — Wellandport, Ont.
Jeremy, Joshua, Jason, Andrea
John & Julie Veldman — Wainfleet, Ont.
Daniel, Rebecca, Johnny
Andy & Wilma Veldman — Wellandport, Ont.
Andrew, Melodie, Carla
Jim & Wenda Veldman — Wellandport, Ont.
Georgina
Anne & Rick Chung — Pickering, Ont.
Frank & Yolanda Veldman — Fruitland, Ont.
An open reception will be held on Saturday, Jan. 25, 1992, at 7:30 p.m. in the Wellandport Christian School gym. Best wishes only.
Home address: R.R. #3 Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

Obituaries

On Christmas day, Dec. 25, 1991, the Lord took home our dear sister-in-law and aunt,

ROELOFJE KIERS-KARSTEN

"Neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8: 39).
Lovingly remembered by Mrs. Maria Karsten-Kiers and children.

Personal

Single Men and Women
If you are over 21 years of age and would like to find a partner in Christian marriage, write to: Christian Marriage Contact Service, P.O. Box 1127, Station B, Burlington, ON L7P 3S9. Please enclose $3.00 for a complete information package explaining our services.
Established in 1967.

Obituaries

"Yet I am always with you; you hold me by my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory" (Ps. 73: 23, 24).
Trusting completely in that assurance, our dear mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,

TETJE BAKKER

ended her earthly pilgrimage of 95 years on Jan. 3, 1992.
She was the widow of Berend Bakker (1985).
Her total reliance on the Lord's guidance and support was the legacy she left us, her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Although she will be missed we rejoice in her "promotion" into heaven.
Jennie & Andrew Miedema
Tettie & Ron Rooke, Michael & Diana Miedema, Bernie & Marsha Miedema
Bernie & Christina Bakker
Bernie & Sue Bakker, Walter & Maureen Bakker, Perry & Anne Bakker
and 10 great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address: 715 Elm St., St. Thomas, ON N5R 1L2

Hazerswoude Smithville
1901 1991
It pleased the Lord to take unto himself our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather,

JOHN VAN DORP

at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont., on Tuesday, Dec. 31, 1991.
Beloved husband of the late Cornelia Stam (1983).
Dear father of:
Jan & Ria van Dorp — the Neth.
Truus & Leendert Hassefras — Brampton
Henry & Leny van Dorp — Woodstock
Tony & Mary van Dorp — Seaforth
Cor & Alice van Dorp — Smithville
Sander & Willy van Dorp — Clinton
Dear grandfather of 25 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.
Also survived by one sister, Grietje, of the Netherlands.
II Corinthians 5: 1.
Funeral service was held at the Chr. Ref. Church of Smithville, Ont., on Friday, Jan. 3, 1992.
Correspondence address: Cor van Dorp, Box 214, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

The Lord took from us our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother,

ROELOFJE KIERS-KARSTEN

of Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont., on Dec. 25, 1991, predeceased by her husband Albert Roelof Kiers in 1974.
She is survived by children:
Rudy & Gre — Hamilton
John & Jo Anne — Wellandport
Ann & John Wensink — Maxville
Trinka Brederode — Smithville
Ann & Cees Rootselaar — Lethbridge, Alta.
Grace & Klaas Visser — Taber, Alta.
Otto & Tina — Caledonia
Jans & Susan — Wainfleet
Albert & Freda — Wellandport
Gerry & Nettie — Iron Springs, Alta.
Jane & Mike Draaistra — Dunnville
Bill & Jo Anne — Stoney Creek
Pete & Lina — St. Catharines
also 54 grandchildren and 75 great-grandchildren, one brother, Piet Karsten, at Shalom Manor, one brother-in-law, Willem Kiers, of the Neth., and two sisters-in-law; Mrs. Marie Karsten at Shalom Manor and Mrs. Chris Kiers of Brazil.
The funeral service was held in the Riverside Chr. Ref. Church on Friday, Dec. 27, 1991. Interment in Riverside cemetery, Wellandport, Ont., pastor Peter W. de Bruyne officiating.
Correspondence address: A.J. Kiers, R.R. #1, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

Classified

Obituaries

Chatham, Ont., Dec. 13, 1991

The members of the Golden Age Club and the residents of South Chatham Village wish to express their deepest sympathy to Mrs. Anje Dreise, her children, grand- and great-grandchildren in the passing away of

MR. JOHANNES FRANCISCUS DREISE

at the age of 83 years.
We pray that God will comfort and strengthen Mrs. Dreise and her family now and each day in the time to come.

On Thursday, Dec. 26, 1991, the Lord in his goodness called to his eternal home, his child and our mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother,

BAUKJE VELLENGA
(nee Miedema)

after a long illness, in her 87th year. Beloved wife of the late Anske Vellenga (deceased June 2, 1991).
Dear mother of:
Ann Vellenga and the late Louie (deceased Nov. 20, 1991)
Tetje Vellenga and the late Willem (deceased Dec. 2, 1977)
Tina & Bob Veenstra
Wilma & Gerald Samplonius
Eva Vellenga
Margret & Adrian Van Rooyen
Survived by 29 grandchildren and 45 great-grandchildren, also two sisters and two sisters-in-law and one uncle in the Netherlands.
"I know that my Redeemer lives and that in the end he will stand upon the earth" (Job 19: 25).
The funeral service was held at the East Chr. Ref. Church, Strathroy, Ont., on Saturday, Dec. 28, 1991, Rev. Jelle Nutma officiating.
Correspondence address: Eva Vellenga, 645 Tennent Ave., London, ON N5X 1L7

Teachers

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School with approximately 330 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from teachers for September 1992. There is an opening in the **elementary grades** for a **music teacher**.
Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Send resume to:

Wernart van Deventer
Principal
Lacombe Chr. School,
P.O. Box 1749,
Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0,
Phone: (403) 782-6531

LONDON, Ont.: London Parental Christian School invites **beginning** and **experienced** teachers to apply for possible teaching positions at **all elementary grade levels** for September 1992.
Teachers interested in a **part-time position** are also requested to apply.,
Please send resume and letter of application to

Mr. Herb Goodhoofd, Principal
LPCS,
202 Clarke Rd,
London, ON N5W 5E4

We look forward to hearing from you.

PORT PERRY, Ont.: Scugog Chr. School invites applications for a **Grade 4/5/6 combination position**, due to maternity leave, for the period beginning March 1, 1992, to the end of the school year. Address all applications and inquiries to:

Mrs. Peggy Michel,
14080 Old Scugog Rd.,
Blackstock, ON L0B 1B0,
Phone: (416) 986-5262

Teachers

PORT PERRY, Ont. : Scugog Christian School, an interdenominational school in Port Perry, Ont., invites applications for a **Teacher** and a **Teaching Principal** for the 1992/93 school year.
Openings are in the **primary and intermediate divisions.** Please address all applications and inquiries to:

Mrs. Peggy Michel
14080 Old Scugog Rd. Blackstock
ON L0B 1B0
Tel. (416) 986-5262

VANCOUVER, B.C.: Vancouver Christian School, a denominationally diverse community currently offering Kindergarten through Grade 8, is planning to expand their junior high program and will require a **Grade 9** teacher for the 1992/93 school year. Persons with a strong Math/Sciences background in education with interest in teaching P.E., Art or Computer, are invited to apply.
Please direct enquiries to:

Ellen Visser
Junior High Program Co-ordinator
Vancouver Christian School
3496 Mons Dr. Vancouver
BC V5M 3E6

We will also require a full-time **Kindergarten** teacher beginning in mid-March, 1992 and a full-time **Grade 4** teacher beginning in late March, 1992. Please direct enquiries regarding these positions to **Ron Donkersloot, Principal,** at the address above.

WILLIAMSBURG, Ont.: Timothy Christian School (Canada) is in need of a **principal/teacher** commencing with the 1992/93 school year for its **elementary school (K-8)**. Interested applicants should send a letter of application and a resume by Feb. 1, 1992, to:

TCS Search Committee
c/o Cora Beking,
R.R. #1 Oxford Station, ON
K0G 1T0
Phone: (613) 258-5396

WOODSTOCK, Ont.: John Knox Chr. School. We are inviting letters of application and resumes for a possible opening in the **intermediate division** for the 1992/93 school year. Experience and strength in **Science and/or French** would be an asset. Please contact:

Henry Tuininga, Principal
800 Juliana Dr., P.O. Box 243,
Woodstock, ON N4S 7W8
Tel. (519) 539-1492

Help Wanted

Positions available

Social service work — Mutual Support Systems, a network of rural group homes in the Niagara Peninsula for children experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, invites applications for the position of **Child Care Worker.** The responsibilities of this live-in position include involvement in the educational programming of the residents, scheduling daily routines, as well as planning special events, all in a family setting. In-service training provides an excellent opportunity for personal growth and skill development at role modelling positive relationships and facilitating the resident's successes. Position includes salary and benefits package. Position commences in January. Please submit resume to

Personnel Manager
Mutual Support Systems
R.R. #1, Perry Rd., Wellandport
ON L0R 2J0
Tel. (416) 899-2311

For Sale/For Rent

For rent or for sale, two-bedroom mobile home in Apopka, Florida (Orlando area).
Available March and April.
Phone (416) 457-0146

For Rent

For rent a **farmhouse and barn.** Location: Guelph Line, near Rockwood, Ont.
For information call:
(519) 836-2307 or (519) 344-3733

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Starting at $175.00 per week.

Sunshine RV Rentals
922 N. Grove St.
Eustis, FL 32726
Phone: (904) 589-1323

Personal

Attractive single female, late twenties, Chr. Ref., with varied interests, loves the outdoors, fond of animals, great homemaker, loves to cook, lives in the Niagara Peninsula. **Seeks sincere, Christian, single male,** late twenties - early thirties, through correspondence, with the intention to lead into a permanent relationship.
If interested, send reply with profile and pictures to: File #2579, c/o Calvinist Contact, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Real Estate

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Edmonton, AB
T5W 4N9
(403) 471-1814
Sid Vandermeulen

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Het vertrouwde adres.

Miscellaneous

THE
Family Christian Bookstore
750 Guelph Line
(Opposite the Burlington Mall)
Burlington, ON
L7R 3N5
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Thurs. and Fri. till 9 p.m.

Make money the easy way

use the classifieds

Help Wanted

Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church
requires a
YOUTH PASTOR
(ordained/unordained)
to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.
Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable.
Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.
Resumes can be sent to:

the Search Committee, c/o Joe Grootenboer
9 Willis Dr., Brampton, Ontario, L6W 1A8
(416) 450-6796

CALVIN COLLEGE

Calvin College invites applications for the position of

Dean of Student Development

The basic function of the position is to ensure that the student development goals of the Student Affairs Division at Calvin College are fostered through all matters relating to new student orientation, student leadership development programs, and student services and policies.
Anticipated start date: **July 1, 1992**. Send application, including resume and three references, by February 28, 1992, to:

Ms. Connie Bellows
Director of Human Resources
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 957-6495

Calvin College is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer and invites and encourages applications from women and minorities.

For Sale

Still available!

CLASSIS NIAGARA'S 1989 REPORT ON SEXUAL ABUSE

In June 1992, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church will act on a report that deals with the shocking results of a survey on abuse: namely, **Report 28**, authored by the "Committee to Study Physical, Emotional and Sexual Abuse." This report refers to Classis Niagara's preliminary study in 1989, which may be ordered from our office.

Write us now!

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Individuals	**$2.00 each (GST inclusive)**

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L2W 1A1

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Also has a large, solid, two-storey barn with insulated first storey.

Please call (416) 372-1551 for further information.

Events/News

Flourishing in Community

How can community-building help us to serve Christ in the 1990s?

Attend a direction-setting 3-day conference for Ontario's Reformed Christian Community

Keynote Speaker:
Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff

February 14-16, 1992
Bolton Conference Centre

Call (416) 825-3578 or write to:
Serving Christ in the Nineties
1880 Lakeshore Rd. W
Mississauga, ON L5J 1J7

Serving Christ in the Nineties

Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Calls received
— to Grace, Welland, Ont., Rev. John W. Jongsma of Second, Sarnia, Ont.

Independent churches

Calls accepted
— to Aylmer, Ont., Independent Christian Reformed Church, Cand. Peter Vellenga.

The answer to this week's Thinkbit riddle can be found in the second half of Genesis 19.

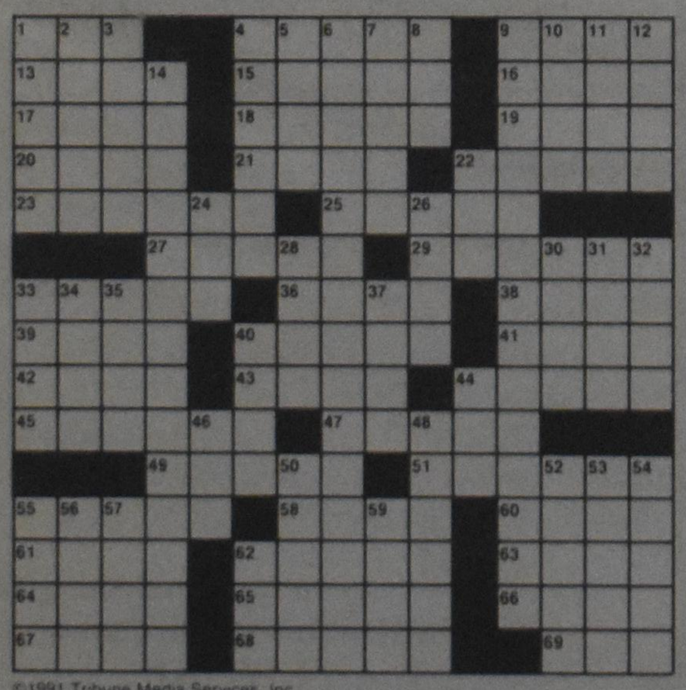
The *most* news on the Netherlands and the Dutch in Canada and the USA

the Windmill

Ontario: P.O. Box 1064, Sta 'B', Rexdale, ON, M9V 2B3
Telephone (416)287-6487 (between 12:00 a.m. & 8:00 p.m.)
Western Canada: P.O. Bag 9033, Surrey, BC, V3T 4X3
USA: P.O. Box 591, Lynden, WA 98264
Telephone: (604)597-2144 (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Weekly puzzle

by Betty Jorgensen



ACROSS
1 Point in law
4 On high
9 The Tent Maker
13 Melville novel
15 Pen inmate
16 Cabby's charge
17 Quarrel
18 Southpaw
19 Unfettered
20 Nor. king
21 Pertaining to Pindar's work
22 Customary
23 Aspen or Tahoe
25 Run after
27 Actress Minnie Maddern —
29 Man at the plate
33 Work group
36 Gaelic
38 Machu Picchu land
39 Search thoroughly
40 Clutch
41 Weather word
42 Copycat
43 Turk. city
44 Items for emcees
45 Pierre Auguste —
47 Retinue
49 Islam's deity
51 Combat
55 En —!
58 Spartan queen
60 Moran or Gray
61 Again
62 Anwar
63 Lodgings money
64 — Lisa
65 Astound
66 Wise
67 Rooney or Hardy
68 Trifled (with)
69 High rock

DOWN
1 Chopper part
2 Zola
3 Parlor pieces
4 Rations
5 Told a falsehood
6 Certain military man
7 Bring
8 Attempt
9 Lithographers
10 Word on a Japanese ship
11 Vicinity
12 Stagger
14 Theater district
22 Country monogram
24 Moroccan range
26 Sleeping
28 Deborah or John
30 Wood
31 Border lake
32 Flees
33 Wound mark
34 Drink to excess
35 So be it
37 Rise to heights
40 Trunk outgrowth
44 Ms Farrow
46 — de France
48 Decreased
50 TX mission
52 Pay for
53 Specialized vocabulary
54 Enlist
55 Vasco da —
56 After a bit
57 Tear
59 Woozy state
62 Posed

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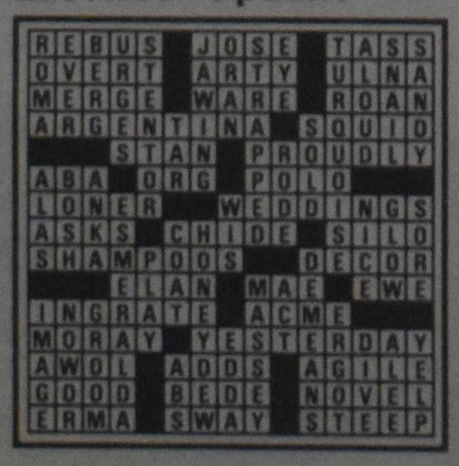
Last week's puzzle



Calendar of Events

Jan. 19 Fortieth anniversary of Riverside CRC, **Welland-port**, Ont. Service at 2:30 p.m., led by Rev. Peter Van Egmond. Social following.

Jan. 20 Public lecture sponsored by Campus Ministries, Brock University, **St. Catharines**, Ont. Speaker: Rabbi Donald Heskins. Topic: "Christian Anti-Semitism." At 8 p.m., in Brock's Senate Chambers.

Jan. 24 Organ recital by Stephanie Proper at 8 p.m., Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. Admission free.

Jan. 24 Chamber music concert with Joachim Segger, Monica Rist, instrumental ensemble and the King's College Chamber Choir. At 8 p.m., West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta.

Jan. 25 Concert by Jan Overduin, organ, and Eric Schultz, trumpet, at 8 p.m., St. Paul's Presb. Church, **Port Hope**, Ont.

Jan. 25 Pioneer Clubs Leadership Conference, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Community Pentecostal Church, **Orleans**, Ont. Call (416) 681-2883.

Jan. 27-Feb. 8 Feb. 4 & 5 CSS's Harry Houtman plans to be in Alberta. Christian Counselling Services-sponsored public evenings with Henri J.M. Nouwen, at 7:30 p.m., Hart House Theatre, U. of T., **Toronto**, Ont. Father Nouwen, well-known author and speaker, will speak on "A time to mourn, a time to dance: a celebration of the Spirit in healing." This CCS celebration of its 25th anniversary will include music and conclude with a party. For tickets ($15), call (416) 489-3350.

Feb. 6 Public forum on "Aboriginal spirituality, land and stewardship." Speakers: Gordon Peters and Stan McKay. At 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A1, McMaster University, **Hamilton**, Ont. Admission free.

Feb. 13-15 "The Indian wants the Bronx," an RC-student-directed play by I. Horovitz, directed by T. David Van Belle, Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. At 8 p.m. each evening (matinee at 2 p.m., Feb. 15). Call (416) 648-2131.

Feb. 14-16 "Serving Christ in the Nineties III" conference at Bolton Conference Centre, **Bolton**, Ont. Keynote speaker: Dr. N. Wolterstorff on "Flourishing in Community." For info. call (416) 825-3578.

Feb. 20 Public forum on "Aboriginal rights, the responsibility of government?" Speakers: John Olthuis and Peter Hamel. At 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A1, McMaster University, **Hamilton**, Ont. Admission free.

Feb. 20-29 Students of LDCH, **London**, Ont., present an adaption of "Anne of Green Gables." At 8 p.m., on Feb. 20, 21, 27, 28 and 29.

Feb. 28 - March 1 Salem Marriage Enrichment Weekend, with leaders Herman & Betty Vanderburg. At Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre, **Niagara Falls**, Ont. For info. call Salem at (416) 528-0353.

March 12 Public forum on "The new world order — justice in international relations." Speakers: Doug Roche and David Koyzis. At 8 p.m., Ewart Angus Hall 1A1, McMaster University, **Hamilton**, Ont. Admission free.

Surgery can prevent stroke, study affirms

Bill Fledderus

BALTIMORE, Maryland — People who are in serious danger of having a stroke should consider having their neck arteries surgically cleaned, according to a recent study explained in the *John Hopkins Medical Letter "Health after 50."*

The study, known as the North American Symptomatic Carotid Endarterectomy Trial, found that scraping the main arteries of the neck (the "carotid" arteries) is the best treatment for patients with a high risk of experiencing a stroke in the near future.

High risk patients are ones who have at least 70 per cent of their arteries blocked by fatty plaque deposits and who have experienced a previous minor stroke or other temporary pre-stroke symptoms (such as weakness or numbness in an arm or leg, loss of vision in one eye, impaired speech or confusion).

Deposits in the neck arteries can be detected during a routine physical exam when the doctor listens with a stethoscope. Blood passing through a blocked artery will characteristically have a high-pitched sound, known as a bruit (pronounced *brew-ee*).

Knowing when surgery is needed

The decision to have artery-scraping surgery must be made by both a neurologist and a neurosurgeon. The neurologist can best evaluate a patient's risk factor (whether the case is serious enough to require surgery). A neurologist can measure the degree of blockage in the arteries by ultrasound.

The specialized surgeon can best evaluate the surgical risk involved, usually by requiring a complete physical examination. Some patients who have partial artery blockage in the neck also have partial blockage near the heart which can affect the decision to perform surgery.

Artery-cleaning a common procedure

Scraping neck arteries is technically called "carotid endarterectomy" and is the third most common surgical procedure performed in the United States.

Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States, following heart disease and cancer. Thirty to 40 per cent of all strokes are caused by buildup of fatty plaque in the carotid arteries, a condition called atherosclerosis.

This buildup is a form of what is commonly called "hardening of the arteries." It can be prevented by not smoking, by reducing weight to a normal level if overweight, and by getting regular exercise. Control of high blood pressure is also important, and many doctors recommend, too, a diet low in cholesterol and saturated fats.

DO IT THE EASY WAY... CALL THE CLASSIFIEDS!

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Shapers of the Reformation

Dr. Heiko Oberman
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Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor

Inspiring stories of women of faith

For Such a Time As This: Twenty-Six Women of Vision and Faith Tell Their Stories, edited by Lillian V. Grissen. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991. Softcover, 296 pp., $12.95 US. (Church discount: 20 per cent.) Reviewed by Marian Van Til.

Inspiring. I try to avoid that word because I think it's over-used, especially in reference to Christian literature. But it rightly applies here. These 26 stories produce smiles, wonder, occasional lumps in the throat, and yes, inspiration. They are the stories of 26 women whose church home is the Christian Reformed Church: most grew up in it; a few came to it and to Christianity later in life. (Members from across the denomination were invited to submit names for possible inclusion in the book.)

These are not stories of "feminists" on the fringe — though a few of the women may consider themselves Christian feminists. Nor are these stories of turn-of-the-century "spinsters" who went into mission work because, after all, they didn't have husbands or children to occupy their time and that was one of the few respectable vocations open to them.

These are stories of women who have worked at home and of those who work outside the home. Some are highly educated, others are not. Some are single, others married; some are mothers, others aren't — but all have a strong sense of personal identity and a desire to best use the talents God gave them.

Some *did* live in an earlier generation and have since heard the Lord greet them with, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Others are still young women who may perhaps expect decades more service here. Still others are late-middle-aged, with many fruitful years behind them, and with, we hope, many to come.

Ordinary becomes extraordinary

There's a range of expertise, service and personalities: Johanna Timmer was first dean of women at Calvin College as well as the visionary force behind, and first acting president of Reformed Bible College; Marguerite Bonnema and Mary De Boer VandenBosch were college roommates who later founded Bethany Home for orphans; Christine VanderLaan Beezhold and Henrietta VanderLaan Mollahan are sisters who founded Elim Christian School for disabled children; Jacoba Beuker Robbert was the envisioner of Pine Rest Christian Hospital; Dora Hofstra and Marie Vander Weide were housemothers for more than 2,000 Navajo children in Rehoboth, New Mexico; Eunice Meyer Vanderlaan is a "voice in the parsonage," an adoptive mother and Right to Life advocate; Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen is a psychologist, author and scholar at Calvin College; Emily Ruth Brink edited the *Psalter Hymnal*, is a former music professor and currently music editor for the CRC; Debra Dixon Deur is an ophthalmologist who runs a non-profit Christian facility that provides eye care for the needy; Doris Tuinstra is a retired businesswoman (former owner of two large garden centres) now involved with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee's cottage industries programs. That doesn't exhaust the list.

Not always easy

As diverse as the 26 are they all were and are people with a passion for doing God's work, for following (mostly unswervingly) down whatever rocky or painful road he might lead them, in the process often discovering talents and strengths they didn't know they had. They are, indeed, "women of vision and faith."

To introduce the book and its purpose, foreword writers Melvin and Sylvia Hugen note that "the Christian Reformed Church — like many other churches — is living between the times. The old is passing away, but the new has not yet come.... What will happen to our marriages, to our children, to women themselves when they begin to dream dreams, follow vision, and prophesy; when they break the barriers and follow the call of God into these brave new worlds?.... [We] need to hear what happens to women who follow the call of God..., what happens to their faith, to them as persons, to their families, to their relationships with men, and to their place in the community of the faithful."

Contrary to what the subtitle implies, the 26 portraits were written, not by the women themselves, but from research pulled together by editor Lillian Grissen (former associate editor of *The Banner*) and 10 other women. Though I am privileged to know some of those writers and what they do, most readers, not having had that opportunity, will wonder about them. It's unfortunate and perhaps ironic that while *For Such a Time As This* exists to celebrate 26 unusual womanservants of the Lord, nowhere can we find even minuscule biographical information about the women who actually wrote the book (except about Lillian Grissen, who wrote nine chapters as well as having done a fine editing job). Those 10 are: Sue Helder Goliber, Sharon Seinen, Annelies Knoppers, Patricia Alderden, Debra Rienstra, Rebecca Flietstra, Carol Flietstra, Bonnie Mulder Wynia, Joanna R. Vos, Barbara Meyer.

Though this book will resonate in a peculiarly rich way with women, it should not be seen as a "woman's work" (pardon the pun) — anymore than lessons learned from our spiritual *fathers* are assumed to be of interest to men only.

This is a highly readable account of Christians who have become adept at putting their faith into action. And *that's* inspiring.

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Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

The dungeon of forgetfulness

"He saved them from the hand of the foe...; But they soon forgot what he had done" (Psalm 106: 10, 13).

A few years ago, Luis Bunuel wrote about his mother in the *New York Review of Books*. He told how she had come down with Korsakov's Syndrome, a disease that attacks those sections of the brain that seem to hold our memories. It wipes the slate clean: all the people she knew, all the things she'd done were gone.

Luis watched it happen to his mother. She didn't know him anymore. She didn't even remember how to tie her shoes. She couldn't function in life because, when her memory left her, so did her identity. Luis wrote: "...Memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all...." He went on: "Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it, we are nothing!"

Luis said that he welcomed his mother's death when it finally came. He said it was a blessing, actually, because once her memory was gone, her identity was gone too.

When faith slips away

Maybe he overstates his case. But then again, maybe not. Because the Psalmist says much the same thing about ancient Israel in Psalm 106. The people of God lost their memories, he says. And when that happened to them, they lost their identity as a nation! They died! They ceased to exist!

Some time ago I was talking with a middle-aged couple. They used to belong to our church, but over the years they drifted away. "We lost our faith," they said to me.

How did it happen, I asked. Was there a crisis in their lives? Did God let them down? Were they taken over by some other religion?

No, they said. It just happened gradually over the years. They got so involved in their business...and they travelled a lot...and they were doing this...and they were doing that...and along the way they just stopped believing.

We talked for a while. I asked them about God and about the things in which their parents believed. I asked them about the songs they learned years ago when they were growing up in Holland. They laughed a little at first because they started to remember things they hadn't thought about in a very long time. Then their eyes began to glow as one memory jogged another, and the stories started tumbling out.

Then came the tears.

Do you know why?

These people hadn't really *lost* their faith; they'd just *forgotten* it! And when they went back to the vaults of their minds, to the treasures of their inner spirits, to the heritage of their lives, they found again what they had missed for too long.

"Remember Jesus!"

A couple of years ago Fred Ferre gave a lecture at Vancouver School of Theology and he told the story of his father, the distinguished theologian and author Nels Ferre. Fred said that his father had come from a family of 10 in Sweden, and that when his father was only 13 years old he was sent alone to find his future in America.

At the train station that day all 10 members of the family stood in a circle and held hands as young Nels' father led them in prayer. Then each person in the circle took a turn to pray. That's the last thing Nels had as his earthly contact with his family.

Then he boarded the train, a wisp of a 13-year-old. He sat at the window, watching his family standing there, crying, waving.... His mother said something to him but he couldn't hear her. He struggled with the window, trying to open it. The conductor blew his whistle and the train began to move. Nels' mother ran alongside the train, right down the platform of the station. Finally Nels got the window open and he caught his mother's voice as they drifted apart: "Nels! Nels! Remember Jesus! Remember Jesus!"

That, said Fred Ferre, was the key that opened the door for his father every time he found himself trapped in the Dungeon of Forgetfulness.

Do you remember Jesus? Do you remember the things God has done?

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.